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Examining the Moderating Role of Organizational Commitment in the Relationship between Shocks and Workplace Outcomes

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by

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Dedication

   I dedicate this paper to my wife, Cailin, who has stood by me through a very difficult period of my life. She shouldered a tremendous amount of stress and never stopped smiling even when I did. I could not have finished without her support. Thank you Cailin; I love you.

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Abstract

Little attention has been given to the role organizational commitment plays within broader models of turnover and withdrawal behavior. Understanding and integrating organizational commitment into such models is an important step to fully appreciating the role that commitment plays in the workplace. The purpose of the current study was twofold. First, this study aimed to examine the moderating role that organizational commitment plays in the unfolding model of voluntary turnover. Second, this study set out to examine the role that the various forms of commitment play in the relationship between shocks and withdrawal-related variables. By utilizing a multidimensional model of commitment, a longitudinal design, and an industry sample, the current study is able to offer empirical evidence to support the role of commitment as a moderator in the relationship between shocks and workplace outcomes. Unique effects that the various forms of commitment have on specific shock-outcome relationships were uncovered, providing at least partial support for the majority of hypotheses offered in the current study. Combined with a unique approach for documenting and measuring the various types of shocks, researchers and practitioners should find numerous applications of the current study. Overall, the results of this study are promising both for what they say about the importance of organizational commitment, as well as for their application in future studies.

Chapter One: Introduction

Organizational commitment is a highly researched job attitude that is linked to several important workplace behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and job satisfaction (Cooper-Hamik & Viswesvaran, 2005; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). However important these outcomes may be, researchers would agree that the primary outcomes of interest when discussing organizational commitment are withdrawal-related variables. In fact, variables such as turnover, turnover intentions, and absenteeism are referred to as focal behaviors of organizational commitment because they are specifically implied by the terms of commitment (Gellatly, Meyer, & Luchak, 2006; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

When examining the role of organizational commitment in turnover and other withdrawal-related behaviors, commitment is typically treated as an antecedent of them. That is, researchers examine how commitment contributes to withdrawal-type behaviors (e.g., Gellatly, Meyer, & Luchak, 2006). While this is a worthwhile endeavor, little attention has been given to the role organizational commitment may play within broader models of turnover and withdrawal behavior such as Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model and Burton, Holtom, Sablynski, Mitchell, and Lee's (2010) withdrawal model. Understanding and integrating organizational commitment into models of turnover and withdrawal behavior is an important step to fully appreciating the role that commitment plays in the workplace.

The purpose of the current study is twofold. First, this study aims to examine the buffering role that organizational commitment plays in the unfolding model of voluntary turnover. Specifically, the moderating role that the various forms of commitment play in the relationship between shocks (see Lee & Mitchell, 1994, 1999) and the focal outcome of turnover. In doing so, this study will go beyond traditional commitment research that tends to examine the relationship between turnover and commitment as a direct causal one. Second, this study sets out to examine the role that the various forms of commitment play in the relationship between shocks and withdrawal-related variables such as turnover intentions and absenteeism. Though both goals examine the moderating role of commitment within Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model, it should be noted that only recently have researchers expanded the unfolding model to apply to other withdrawal-related variables (see Burton et al., 2010). As such, the first goal focuses on the traditional conceptualization of the unfolding model while the second goal focuses on more recent conceptualizations that push the model beyond simply turnover.

The value of examining the moderating role that organizational commitment plays in Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model is apparent when considering the fact that researchers have largely neglected the potential moderators that may affect the relationships espoused in the unfolding model. For example, there is only one article to date in a peer-reviewed journal in which a potential moderator (job embeddedness) of the relationship between shocks and withdrawal-related behaviors has been examined (Burton, et al., 2010). For the most part, researchers have treated work attitudes solely as antecedents, giving little thought to the possibility that work attitudes such as organizational commitment may in fact develop and act separately from more distal

antecedents such as shocks (Mobley, 1977; Steers & Mowday, 1981) in spite of evidence

to the contrary (Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Ahlburg, 2005). Though it is

likely that shocks have an impact on work attitudes, it is premature to discount the effect

that work attitudes have on the interpretation of shocks. Additionally, researchers often

treat organizational commitment as a unified construct, devoid of different forms (e.g.,

Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). However, commitment research has repeatedly

demonstrated that commitment is in fact a multidimensional construct with each type of

commitment showing unique relationships with workplace outcomes (Meyer et al.,

2002). Utilizing a multidimensional model of commitment, such as Allen and Meyer's

(1990) three-dimensional model, may prove useful in furthering the research of not only

withdrawal researchers who are interested in the moderating characteristics of the various

forms, but also commitment researchers who are constantly searching for the ways in

which commitment plays a role in workplace outcomes.

In addition to the theoretical value of the current study, practitioners should also

be concerned about the role that commitment plays in the shock-withdrawal relationship.

Specifically, practitioners ought to recognize the value of examining the buffering (or

exacerbating) effects that the various forms of commitment may have on not only

workplace shocks, but shocks of all kinds. As shocks, by definition (Burton et al., 2010;

Lee & Mitchell, 1994), lead to withdrawal-related outcomes, practitioners (particularly

those in management positions) should find any buffering effects to be useful in their

day-to-day work. If increasing commitment can somehow reduce the effects of shocks on

turnover and other withdrawal outcomes, managers would be well advised to increase

commitment in their employees. Also, as the current study aims to examine how a multi-

dimensional model of commitment moderates shocks, perhaps it will be uncovered that only certain types of commitment are capable of buffering the effects of shocks. In this case, managers would need to take care in which types of commitment they look to increase. Finally, by furthering the research on potential moderators of the shock-withdrawal relationship it may be possible for management professionals to use a two-pronged approach in limiting withdrawal behaviors. The first being trying to limit preventable shocks and the second being zeroing in on those moderators (potentially commitment) that can help to buffer the effects of shock in the situation that they cannot be prevented. The sections that follow will go into greater detail regarding organizational commitment and its different forms as well as describe the unfolding model of voluntary turnover and how it has evolved to predict other withdrawal-related variables. Based on these reviews, specific hypotheses will be posited regarding the current study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Organizational Commitment

The first conceptualization of organizational commitment traces back to Becker's (1960) side-bet theory. According to Becker (1960), workers enter into an unspoken contract with their organization in which exchanges, or "side-bets" are made. These side-bets are essentially investments that a worker makes in their organization. As time goes on, Becker (1960) contended that workers make progressively more side-bets in their organization. As these side-bets accrue, it becomes more difficult for a worker to leave their organization. Even though researchers have moved away from Becker's (1960) original conceptualization of organizational commitment, the link that he describes between commitment and turnover is still evident in modern theories (e.g., Meyer & Allen's, 1991, three component model). Additionally, most modern scales incorporate the side-bet component on some level in the form of continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), and more recently, the economic exchanges sub-component of continuance commitment (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; McGee & Ford, 1987; Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990; Somers, 1993; Taing et al., 2011).

The first major shift in the conceptualization of organizational commitment was marked by a change in focus from side-bets to psychological attachment. This definition of commitment posited that while Becker's (1960) side-bet theory had some merit, it ignored the affective component inherent in commitment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). According to this new

conceptualization, organizational commitment was defined as a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. Though this definition contains three components, in light of modern theories it is better conceptualized as a single factor comprised of three related dimensions (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002). Based on this affect-based definition of commitment, Porter and his colleagues developed the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). While groundbreaking in terms of commitment research, the OCQ was later criticized for focusing on only one-dimension and for being worded in terms of behavioral intentions as opposed to attitudes (Meyer & Allen, 1984; O'Reily & Chatman, 1986).

In response to the claim that the OCQ was limited in both scope and composition, focus shifted to developing a multidimensional measure of organizational commitment. While there are two dominant theories that focus on a multidimensional measure of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1984; O'Reily & Chatman, 1986), the approach used by Meyer and Allen (1984) has been the primary conceptualization of organizational commitment since its development. The work done by O'Reily and Chatman (1986) did, however, advance the idea that organizational commitment should be studied for linkages to other workplace outcomes. Starting with a two-component scale that captured the affective component of commitment as well as the side-bet component (continuance commitment), and later adding a third component labeled normative commitment, Allen and Meyer's (1990) three component model of organizational commitment has been the industry standard for over two decades.

According to Allen and Meyer (1990), organizational commitment is a psychological force that binds employees to their organization and makes turnover less likely. High levels of commitment also contribute to the performance of required job tasks and OCB (Meyer et al., 2002). Because commitment results from qualitatively different mindsets (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), it is a multidimensional construct (Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1984; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Based on this assessment, organizational commitment is commonly conceptualized as encompassing three forms: affective, normative, and continuance (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Affective organizational commitment. Affective commitment (AOC) involves an emotional attachment to, involvement in, and identification with one's organization, all of which are based on a desire to belong. Affective organizational commitment arises from the perception of positive social exchanges between the employee and organization. These exchanges are typically based on ones perceptions of support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale, 2006) and fairness (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). AOC is the most widely studied base of commitment because it tends to be the best predictor of work criteria (e.g., job performance and withdrawal) relative to the other commitments (Meyer et al., 2002).

Normative organizational commitment. Normative commitment (NOC) derives from a perceived obligation to maintain membership, which is grounded in a sense of morality. Normative organizational commitment is thought to result from early socialization experiences with one's culture and family (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Like

AOC, it has been found to relate favorably to many work attitudes and behaviors. The high correlations that have been observed between AOC and NOC have, however, led some researchers to question the usefulness of NOC (Cohen, 2007). In spite of this, research still favors the distinct nature of AOC and NOC (Meyer et al., 2002).

Continuance organizational commitment. Lastly, continuance commitment (COC) is derived from the perceived costs of leaving, including the loss of desired investments and few job alternatives. Paralleling the social exchanges that underlie AOC, COC is linked to employee–organization economic exchanges (Shore et al., 2006). Becker (1960) laid the groundwork for the concept of COC with his side-bet theory. This theory states that commitment results from the accumulation of economic investments or side-bets that would be lost if the employee discontinued membership in the organization. Becker's (1960) side-bet commitment was later labeled COC by Meyer and Allen (1984). Like all forms of commitment, COC has been found to be negatively related to turnover ($\rho = -.10$) as well as turnover intentions ($\rho = -.17$; Meyer et al., 2002). However, unlike AOC and NOC, COC is typically unrelated or negatively related to other desirable work criteria (e.g., task performance and satisfaction; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002).

Interestingly, there is increasing evidence that COC encompasses more than one dimension (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990; Somers, 1993; McGee & Ford, 1987; Jaros, 1997). Taing, Groff, Granger, Jackson, and Johnson (2011) argue that COC is comprised of two dimensions: economic exchanges (EE) and few alternatives (FA). These two dimensions are distinguishable based on their underlying approach and avoidance motivations (Johnson, Chang, & Yang, 2010).

Continuance organizational commitment-economic exchanges is defined as commitment that develops when an employee perceives desirable economic exchange opportunities at their current job. In contrast, COC-few alternatives is defined as commitment that develops when an employee feels a sense of being trapped in their current position. The distinction between COC-few alternatives and –economic exchanges has proven useful because they are differentially related to work attitudes and performance (Taing et al., 2011). In general, attitudinal commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment based on economic exchanges tend to be positively related to favorable attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction and citizenship behaviors), whereas continuance commitment based on few alternatives is weakly related or, in some cases, negatively related to such outcomes (Taing et al., 2011; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002). In the following section Lee & Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model of voluntary turnover is discussed and specific applications to alternative outcomes are explored.

Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover

The unfolding model of turnover was first developed by Lee and Mitchell (1994). Dissatisfied with turnover models of the time that failed to make significant contributions beyond the seminal work of March and Simon (1958), Lee and Mitchell (1994) suggested a model utilizing distinct paths that workers may take in deciding to leave their organization. By examining the interplay among four key concepts (shocks, scripts, images, and alternatives search/evaluation), the unfolding model identifies four unique paths that workers may follow when deciding to voluntarily turnover. The following sections will go into greater depth regarding the key concepts of the unfolding model as

well as how the different paths laid out by Lee and Mitchell (1994) function.

Shocks to the system. Commonly referred to simply as "shocks," Lee and Mitchell (1994) describe a shock as any event that "jars" employees into evaluating aspects of their job, up to and including the choice to voluntarily quit. Of the major concepts in the unfolding model, shocks are undoubtedly the most important and groundbreaking in terms of turnover research. A shock can be thought of as any event that is sufficiently jarring as to not be ignored, and is interpreted in light of and integrated into a worker's set of beliefs and images. Though shocks are not limited to a specific set of events, it should be noted that not all events are considered shocks. The primary inclusionary measure of whether or not an event is considered a shock is that it must result in "job-related deliberations that involve the prospect leaving the job" (Lee & Mitchell, 1994, p.60). Though it could be inferred that a shock must be an unexpected event, shocks can in fact be expected or unexpected. So long as an event causes an employee to consider quitting their current job, it can be classified as a shock. For example, Lisa and her husband have decided that they want to have their first child. Lisa understands that having a child will put extra strain on her work-family balance, but having discussed it with her husband, feels as though she can return to work shortly after having the child. However, upon returning to work, Lisa finds herself longing to stay home with her new born baby. As such, Lisa decides to quit her job in order to stay at home full-time. In this example, having a child would be considered an expected shock. Even though Lisa and her husband had planned to have a child (expected shock), the birth of the child resulted in Lisa contemplating and ultimately quitting her job (turnover).

In addition to shocks being expected and unexpected, they may also be positive,

negative, or neutral. It is not difficult to think of any number of shocks that would be considered negative (e.g., poor performance appraisal, being passed over for a promotion). However, along the lines of positive versus negative reinforcement, positive shocks take a bit of mental maneuvering to understand. Positive shocks can be thought of as any positive event (e.g., winning the lottery, unsolicited job offer) that leads an employee to seriously considered quitting their current job. Though positive in nature, it is still required that they cause an employee to reconsider their current job situation. The final category, neutral, is typically considered an amalgamation of positive and negative aspects of an event that lead to an overall neutral evaluation (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). For example, the shock of having a child may have both negative (e.g., another mouth to feed) and positive (e.g., realization that the organization provides many family friendly services) aspects that, when combined, end up resulting in a neutral composite.

One final point regarding shocks is that in addition to being expected/unexpected and positive/negative/neutral, they may also occur in any domain of a person's life. One way to think of shocks is that they may be professional, personal, or work-related (see Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). An example of a professional shock would be completing an advanced degree. A personal shock could be a death of a family-member. Finally, a work-related shock could be a promotion or perhaps a demotion.

Integrating the above information clearly indicates that while most people are familiar with the idea of a shocking event, shocks as they are used in the unfolding model are incredibly diverse events. They can be expected or unexpected. They can be positive, negative or neutral. They can even be professionally based, work-related, or personally based. Finally, no matter how these options are combined, a shock must be interpreted by

the worker in such a way that it causes them to reconsider their intentions to stay with the job (Lee, Mitchell, Wise, & Fireman, 1996).

Scripts. As defined by Gioia (1986), scripts are cognitive mechanisms that help to shape behavior and actions by retaining context-specific information regarding events and sequences. In other words, scripts can be thought of as preprogrammed responses that are based on previous experiences or information (Jex, 2002). For example, a worker may have previously been employed by a company that instituted a pay freeze, and decided it would be best to find a new organization to work for. If this situation was to occur again, the preprogrammed response (script) would engage and the worker would not even need to think about what to do. In the terms of the unfolding model, scripts would be referenced when an employee is confronted by a shock. More specific information regarding how scripts are used within the unfolding model will be discussed in the sections to follow.

Images. Borrowing from the decision-making model in Beach's (1990, 1997) image theory, the unfolding model utilizes the concept of domain-specific images. More precisely, the unfolding model posits that employees go through a process of screening incoming information when engaging in the decision making process (stay or quit). When going through this process, employees are said to focus on the following images: value, trajectory, and strategic. Focusing on these images allows for a compatibility test in which certain thresholds must be met in order for an image violation not to occur (Beach, 1993). As these image comparisons are non-compensatory—one well fitting image cannot cover up the violation of another. The first image (value) can be described as the set of general standards and values that help to define a person. An example of a value

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image could be "family comes first." In terms of the unfolding model, when an employee experiences a shock that leads to a quit/stay decision focusing on image congruency, determining the compatibility of their current job situation with the value of "family comes first" would represent a value image comparison. The second image (trajectory) is concerned with the goals that an employee sets for themselves. An employee with the goal of becoming a regional sales manager would be one example of a trajectory image. The final image (strategic) is also goal related, but in this case refers to goal attainment and the behaviors and strategies used in the goal attainment process. An employee who has decided to volunteer for overtime work in an effort to attain their goal of becoming regional manager is an excellent example of a strategic image in work. The manner in which these images are applied in the unfolding model will be discussed further in the *decision paths* section.

Alternatives. This concept simply refers to the presence of a specific job alternative or the lack of a specific job alternative. This concept will be discussed in greater depth in the sections that follow.

Decision Paths. As discussed previously, the unfolding model suggests that employees travel down one of four unique paths when making a turnover decision. The sections that follow outline the four paths, integrating the key concepts mentioned in the previous section. Interested readers can refer to Table 1 for a summary of the decision paths.

Table 1- Unfolding Model Decision Path Summary

	1	2	3	4a	4b
Shock	yes	yes	yes	no	no
Matching Script	yes	no	no	no	no
Image Violation	n/a	yes	yes	yes	yes
Disaffection	n/a	n/a	yes	yes	yes
Job Search	no	no	yes*	no**	yes
Evaluation of Alternatives	no	no	yes	no	yes
Offers in Hand	no	no	yes	no	yes

n/a: The characteristic is not applicable.

*job search does not technically occur if the offer is unsolicited

**job search does not occur prior to decision to quit; job search may occur
after

Decision path #1. The first of the decision paths outlined by Lee and Mitchell

(1994) starts when a worker experiences a shock. This shock makes the worker

reconsider maintaining employment with their current organization. Recall that a shock is

any event jarring enough to cause a worker to consider quitting this current job. After the

worker experiences a shock, they are prompted to search their memory for a matching

script (Abelson, 1976). This script, as discussed earlier, is a course of action prompted by

context-specific information that is stored in one's memory (Giola, 1986). After an

appropriate script is found and enacted, the worker is guided as to what is the best course

of action given the situation and its accompanying script. As an example, consider a

worker (Bob) that has been aiming to land a management position. These positions do not

open up often, and when they do they are highly prized. Now imagine that a management

position has just opened up and Bob was one of the employees selected for an interview.

After feeling very confident that he would land the position, Bob learns that he is getting

passed over for the position. Instead of Bob getting the prestigious position he so badly

desired, he finds out that one of his underachieving co-workers was instead selected for

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the promotion. At a previous job, Bob found himself in a very similar situation. In that instance, Bob decided that he did not want to work for a company that rewards incompetence. As such, Bob decided that the best thing to do was to quit and begin searching for a new job. In the framework of the unfolding model, decision path #1 says that Bob, now confronted with a similar situation, will search for a matching script. After one is identified (quit and begin searching for a new job), it will be enacted and Bob will once again quit his job.

Decision path #2. Along the same lines as the first decision path, the second decision path outlined in Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model begins with the worker experiencing a shock. This shock prompts the worker to consider quitting their current job. However, in path #2, the worker has no script available and therefore is not able to quickly decide their job status. In this case, the worker must now examine the presence or absence of any image violations. These violations may occur in one of three domains: value, trajectory, and strategic (Beach, 1990, 1997). Recall from the previous discussion of images that while it is possible to have multiple image violations relating to the same shock, a violation need only occur with one image. Readers may reference the previous section on images for further discussion of specific images.

Upon examining whether potential image violations are present, the worker decides to either quit (image violation is present) or continue with their current job (lack of an image violation). For an example of how path #2 works, consider again the case of Bob. In the previous example, Bob experienced a shock when he was passed over for a promotion. Assuming that this situation has never happened to Bob in the past, no script exists for how Bob should react. Instead, Bob must examine whether or not an image

violation has occurred. Bob values hard work, so he decides that promoting a lazy worker over himself is not in line with his personal values. As such, an image violation (value) has occurred and Bob decides to quit his current job. While this example represents a situation in which a value image violation has led to Bob quitting his job, it is possible for other image violations to occur given the same situation.

Building on the example above, recall that Bob badly desired to obtain a prestigious management position. Not only does the position pay more, but it also demands greater respect from coworkers. Based on these factors, soon after he was hired, Bob set a goal for himself of becoming a manager the first chance he got. After learning that he did not obtain his goal of becoming a manager, Bob decided that it was unlikely that another management position would open within the foreseeable future. As such, it is unlikely that Bob will be able to achieve his goal of becoming a manager. Based on this assessment, it is apparent that a trajectory image violation has occurred. As such, it is unlikely that Bob will remain with his current organization. Notice that this is the same situation as discussed previously, but now a different image is also being violated. This is not unusual because it is possible to violate multiple images simultaneously.

In a final example, and staying with the example of Bob, recall that Bob has set for himself the goal of becoming a manger. To do so, Bob has decided that the best way to achieve his goal is to volunteer to work on weekends whenever the opportunity presents itself. After working countless weekends, an open management position was announced and a hopeful Bob applied. After all candidates were interviewed, the announcement came down that Bob did not get the position. After contemplating the outcome, Bob realizes that he was the only applicant that actually worked weekends. He

quickly decides that his current organization does not follow the strategic image that he has set for himself. Bob decides that he would be more successful in a different environment. This image violation (strategic) leads to Bob ultimately quitting his job. Note how it is possible to have violations of one, two, or all three images. As long as one image fails the compatibility test, a decision to quit will result.

Decision path #3. The third path outlined by Lee and Mitchell (1994) is very similar to the second path, but with one key difference. In the second decision path, the worker does not have any particular job alternatives in mind. However, in decision path #3, the worker has at least one specific job alternative available to them as they go through the path. Within the unfolding model outline, path #3 begins when a worker experiences a shock. This shock causes the worker to consider their employment status with their current employer. Like the second path, no script is available so the worker begins to look for potential image violations. If no violation is found, the worker will decide to continue their tenure. However, if a violation is apparent, path #3 begins to differ from path #2. Recall that in the second path, once an image violation is discovered, the worker simply terminates their employment. In the third path, this step is a bit more complicated. Instead of simply quitting, the worker looks at their concrete job alternatives and compares how each stack up on the various image preferences. Based on these comparisons a worker will either decide to quit if they determine that a job alternative is less likely to violate their images, or stay if they decide that even though their current job has violated at least one of the three images, job alternatives do not offer a better fit (i.e., less chance for image violation).

As an example, recall that Bob was a hard worker that was subsequently passed

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over for promotion in favor of an incompetent co-worker. In line with path #3, Bob first experienced the shock of getting passed over for promotion. Assuming Bob has no script available for this situation he begins to look for the presence of image violations. Knowing that he personally values hard work, had set a clear goal of becoming a manger, and had laid out a strategy for obtaining that goal, Bob decides that image violations have occurred (value, trajectory, and strategic). This is where path #3 splits from path #2. Now that Bob has identified that an image violation has occurred, he remembers hearing about a job opportunity with an industry competitor that performs work identical to the company he currently works for. Immediately, Bob begins to research this job alternative to determine if it is worth seriously considering. According to the unfolding model, an alternative position is seriously worth considering if that job alternative provides adequate fit as defined by compatible images (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). In other words, if a job alternative does not violate any of the primary images (value, trajectory, and strategic), it will be seriously considered. After contacting associates at the alternative organization, Bob concludes that this alternative ought to be seriously considered due to the fact that he can't find any areas in which the alternative position would violate any images he currently has. As such, Bob begins to compare the benefits of staying with the current organization versus quitting to take a spot with the alternative organization. In this case, it is clear that the alternative is a much better fit in terms of images than is his current organization. Based on this analysis, Bob decides that the job alternative is a better fit and quits his current position.

By definition, the third decision path in the unfolding model involves actively searching for job alternatives. However, there is a unique instance in which a job search

does not technically take place. If an employee receives an unsolicited job offer, which acts as the initial shock, it is possible that a completely satisfied worker (i.e., no image violations) could eventually turnover. In this situation, the shock of receiving an unsolicited job offer triggers the worker to examine the alternative position for any image violations. If no violations are found, the alternative job is then compared with the current position to determine which job would be a better fit. It is possible for the worker to decide that the job alternative is a better fit even though the current job does not result in any image violations. For example, in Bob's case, if he were to have received the promotion that he applied for, it can be assumed that no image violations would have occurred. However, it would still be possible for Bob to receive an unsolicited offer from a competing organization. This offer could potentially trigger the series of events discussed at the beginning of this paragraph.

   Decision paths #4a and #4b. Though the central concept of the unfolding model is that shocks start the turnover process, Lee and Mitchell (1994) acknowledge that more traditional models of turnover are not to be completely discounted. As such, decision path #4 closely resembles traditional "slow burn" turnover models such as that posited by Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino (1979). Because of this, Lee and Mitchell (1994) have been quick to point out that the unfolding model should be seen more as an extension to traditional turnover models as opposed to a replacement. In decision path #4, workers decide to quit their current job based because either their goals are not being achieved, or that there is some sort of image violation that is occurring. The key difference between path #4 and the previous paths is that there is no shock in path #4. Instead, this path describes a gradual process that builds over time.

Within this path, Lee and Mitchell (1994) differentiate between two slightly different "sub-paths." Path 4a occurs when the discrepancy between workers' goals/images and their experiences on the job becomes so large that it prompts them to quit, regardless of potential job alternatives. On the other hand, path 4b occurs when a mismatch between goals/images exists, but the worker first goes through a traditional job search before deciding whether to quit or not. If, for example, a lack of alternatives is found, the worker may decide to stay. However, if an abundance of job alternatives are found, the worker will be likely to turnover. In both cases, job dissatisfaction is the precursor to turnover in paths 4a and 4b.

Expansion of the Unfolding Model

Even though the unfolding model is relatively new as far as turnover models are concerned, there have already been some interesting updates regarding ways in which the model is applied (e.g., investigating outcomes other than turnover). When carefully examining the unfolding model, it is evident that there are many situations in which workers experience a shock that causes them to consider quitting, and yet they do not (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Lee et al., 1999). These instances could easily be labeled a positive outcome for the organization because reduced turnover is commonly considered to be a good thing (e.g., lowered training costs). However, as researchers have pointed out (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990; Hanisch, Hulin, & Roznowski, 1998; Hulin & Judge, 2003), when workers experience distress concerning their job (such as that brought on by shocks) and entertain thoughts of quitting, yet decide to stay, the impact of these shock may manifest in other types of behaviors (Burton et al., 2010). As demonstrated by Hanisch and Hulin (1990), when faced with difficult work situations, workers may

withdraw in a variety of ways. For example, rather than quit, a worker may be absent more often, show up to work late on a regular basis, or engage in counterproductive work behavior (CWB).

Combining the findings of Hanisch and colleagues (1998) with Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model of voluntary turnover yields an interesting "overall withdrawal model." That is, the unfolding model was designed to account for turnover; specifically turnover due to shocks. However, as the model clearly indicates, there are instances in which a worker experiences a shock but ultimately decides not to quit. In these instances, the findings of Hanisch and Hulin (1990) suggest that instead of workers passively returning to "business as usual," they may withdraw in other ways. A recent paper by Burton et al. (2010) has made similar connections, and has taken it a step further in that they examined a potential moderator—job embeddedness—of shocks on alternate outcomes of the unfolding model. The findings of Burton et al. (2010) suggest that not only do shocks contribute to other withdrawal behaviors besides quitting, but that certain workplace attitudes may moderate the effects of shocks on withdrawal behaviors. These findings lend credence to the idea that the unfolding model can be informative for predicting withdrawal outcomes other than turnover. Additionally, there is now evidence that moderators may play a role in the relationship between shocks and various withdrawal related outcomes. In the following section, the potential role of organizational commitment as a moderator of the effects of shocks on withdrawal behaviors is discussed.

Integrating Organizational Commitment with the Unfolding Model

As evidenced by the findings of Burton et al. (2010), there is room within the general framework of the unfolding model to examine potentially unique roles that moderators may play. Of particular interest when examining potential moderators is the concept of shocks that was discussed earlier in this paper. Lee and Mitchell (1994) describe shocks as jarring events that cause a worker to evaluate their standing within their current organization. As such, shocks can be described as a "push force" that urge an employee to quit their current job. On the other end of the spectrum are phenomena that urge employees to stay in their current job. As described by Burton et al. (2010), these variables can be described as a "pull force." While push forces act to remove a worker, pull forces act as a type of buffer or filter through which workers interpret the push force. When combined, an argument can be made that (regardless of the path taken) the unfolding model may not be as simple as shocks (push) leading to turnover decisions. Instead, perhaps the operation of shocks within the unfolding model is more accurately understood when pull forces are considered. To date only one potential pull force (viz., job embeddedness) has been incorporate into the unfolding model in the form of a moderator of shocks, and this was only done in a partial nature as turnover was not examined as an outcome (Burton et al., 2010). The current paper sets out to examine the moderating role of a potent pull force, organizational commitment (Meyer et al., 2001). By doing so, the current study hopes to further the research on the unfolding model while at the same time building on the evidence supporting the importance of organizational commitment.

Job Embeddedness. Introduced by Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez in

2001, job embeddedness is a relatively new construct when compared to traditional

constructs in the turnover literature that focus on job attitudes (i.e., organizational

commitment). Job embeddedness can be thought of as the sum of all factors that

influence a worker's retention. At its core, job embeddedness is composed of three key

aspects: links, fit, and sacrifice. The first aspect, *links*, refers to the connections (both

formal and informal) that an employee has to other people or institutions in the

organization or community (Burton et al., 2010). According to Mitchell et al. (2001),

every employee is bound to their organization through a social, psychological, and

financial web that includes friends (work and non-work), the community they live in, and

groups they belong to, just to name a few. The more connections there are between the

employee and the web, the stronger the bond between the employee and their

organization. In other words, employees that have more connections with the people and

things around them, the less likely they are to leave their organization.

The second aspect, *fit,* is described as an employee's perceived compatibility with

their organization or community (Burton et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2001). Within the

job embeddedness construct, the fit aspect says that a worker's values, goals, and future

plans must match with those espoused by their organization and community. As research

has shown (e.g., Chan, 1996), when there is poor person-organization fit, employees are

more likely to turnover. Additionally, Mitchell et al. (2001) argue that not only is person-

organization fit important, but person-community fit is also just as important. Things

such as community culture, weather, and religious climate are all examples of areas

where mismatches can take place.

The final aspect of job embeddedness, *sacrifice*, refers to the perceived tangible

and psychological losses associated with quitting a job (Mitchell et al., 2001). The notion

behind this aspect is that the more an employee would lose upon leaving their current job,

the less likely they are to quit. Just like the other aspects of the job embeddedness

construct, sacrifice refers to both on the job losses as well as off the job losses. For

example, over a period of time a worker may have accrued any number of work-related

benefits such as pension plans, close friendships, and tenure. Deciding to leave an

organization could potentially put all of these things in jeopardy. Though more evident

when taking a new job would require a physical relocation, there is also the potential to

lose any number of community related benefits such as relationships with neighbors,

membership to specific school zones, and proximity to the workplace.

  Job Embeddedness versus Organizational Commitment. With organizational

commitment being central to the current study, it is important to distinguish it from

similar constructs. In the case of organizational commitment, the construct of job

embeddedness developed by Mitchell et al. (2001) is theoretically the most similar. On

the surface, the comparison between organizational commitment and job embeddedness

seems reasonable. After all, to the casual observer, commitment and embeddedness

correspond to similar phenomena. Mitchell et al. (2001) define job embeddedness as a

collection of factors that influence retention while Allen and Meyer (1990) define

organizational commitment as a psychological force that binds employees to their

organization and makes retention more likely. Upon closer inspection, though, it becomes

evident that reducing turnover is where the similarities end.

  The primary issue when comparing organizational commitment to job

embeddedness is that organizational commitment deals exclusively with issues pertaining

to the organization. That is, the construct is not concerned with community or non-work factors. As Mitchell et al. (2001) point out, this means that half of the job embeddedness construct is not covered by organizational commitment. While this may lead to the belief that perhaps job embeddedness is a more appropriate construct because it covers more ground, in fact the opposite is true. Borrowing from Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action, it is important to have correspondence between attitudes and behaviors. This means that the target of an attitude must match the target of a behavior. Based on this reasoning, using an organizationally focused job attitude in conjunction with organizationally focused behaviors is called for. While job embeddedness is clouded with several targets, organizational commitment is focused on work-related attitudes. As such, when examining work-related outcomes, it may be more appropriate to use organizational commitment in lieu of job embeddedness.

In addition to the differences in focus, the actual aspects or dimensions of these constructs are quite different from each other. Affective commitment is one example of this difference. Involving an emotional attachment to, involvement in, and identification with one's organization, affective commitment focuses on strong positive feelings towards the organization. While there may be some affective components reflected in the aspects of job embeddedness (e.g., fit), none of the aspects are inherently affect driven. That is, nowhere do job embeddedness researchers contend that positive affect for the organization is a key driver in reducing turnover (see Mitchell et al., 2001). Instead it is more representative to describe the aspects of job embeddedness as cognitively driven as opposed to affectively driven. Along the same lines, normative commitment has little in common with any of the aspects of job embeddedness. While creating more links with

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one's organization may increase a sense of obligation (the central premise of normative commitment), there is no evidence that more links must lead to greater obligation. For example, many of the links described by Mitchell et al. (2001) such as tenure or retirement plans are unlikely to create a sense of moral obligation to stay with an organization.

Perhaps the closest match between job embeddedness and organizational commitment involves the dimension of continuance commitment. Within this construct, researchers have argued that a subcomponent focusing on economic exchanges is present (Taing et al., 2011). This component of continuance commitment focuses on the economic benefits that employees accrue within an organization. The logic is that the more favorable the economic benefits, the more committed an employee will be. Contrast this with the sacrifice aspect of job embeddedness and there seems to be some similarities. However, continuance commitment based on economic exchanges focuses solely on the organization while job embeddedness is more general in that it includes any benefits that are found anywhere in a workers life (family, social, community, etc.). Additionally, continuance commitment also contains a component focusing on lack of job alternatives that is completely lacking in the job embeddedness construct (Mitchell et al., 2001; Taing et al., 2011). Combined with the finding that job embeddedness predicts voluntary turnover after controlling for common job attitudes, including organizational commitment, it becomes apparent that these constructs are in fact different from one another.

In the traditional conceptualization of the unfolding model, the only outcome of interest is turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Through various pathways, shocks lead to an

employment evaluation that ends with the employee making a decision to either continue employment or quit. In the case where an employee decides to quit, turnover is the outcome of interest. However, as the unfolding model notes, there are situations in which an employee decides to continue with their current organization. In this case, as recent research has indicated (Burton et al., 2010), perhaps it is important to examine alternative withdrawal behaviors in lieu of turnover. As such, hypotheses are offered regarding the moderating effect organizational commitment has on the relationship between shocks and withdrawal behaviors.

Interplay of Shocks and Organizational Commitment for Predicting Turnover. Commitment scholars define focal behaviors as ones that are specifically implied by the terms of commitment (Gellatly, Meyer, & Luchak, 2006; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Generally, withdrawal-related variables like actual turnover, turnover intentions, and absenteeism are considered focal behaviors for organizational commitment. Conveniently, these behaviors also fall in line with both focal and alternative withdrawal outcomes associated with the unfolding model (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Taris, Kalimo, & Schaufeli, 2002).

Turnover. Within the scope of the original definition of the unfolding model, turnover is the focal outcome of interest (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Even in the framework of more recent conceptualizations and uses (Burton et al., 2010), turnover still remains the primary outcome that interests researchers. The unfolding model is, after all, a turnover model at heart. Within Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model, it is believed that shocks ultimately lead to a decision to either quit or stay with a current employer. However, it possible that there are moderating variables that alter the relationship

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between shocks and turnover. Given the findings of Burton et al. (2001), it seems very likely that binding forces such as job embeddedness may buffer the effects of shocks. While interesting, this research only calls to the importance of examining additional binding forces that may alter the relationship between shocks and workplace outcomes. As discussed previously, the construct of organizational commitment is a highly regarded job attitude that has been found to be significantly correlated with turnover (AOC, ρ = -.17; NOC, ρ = -.16; COC, ρ = -.10; Meyer et al., 2002) via a direct relationship. Due to the binding forces behind organizational commitment, it is possible that commitment can have a direct effect on turnover while also reducing turnover via its moderating effect on the relationship between shocks and turnover. In the paragraphs that follow hypotheses are proposed regarding the potential role that the various forms of organizational commitment may play in shock-outcome relationship.

AOC as a moderator of shock–turnover relations. Affective organizational commitment is the most highly regarded form of organizational commitment due to its strong relationship with focal behaviors such as turnover (Meyer et al., 2002). While this relationship is often viewed as a simple direct effect, painting the role that AOC plays in the turnover process as such may overlook a potential moderating role. To explain this better, consider the shock construct that is central to the unfolding model of turnover. According to this model, a shock is a jarring event perceived by an employee who then contemplates whether to not to quit their job. However, as recent research has demonstrated (see Burton et al., 2010), it is possible for "binding" type constructs to also serve as moderators between shocks and various workplace outcomes. In terms of affective commitment, there is reason to believe that it too will serve as a moderator in

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the relationship between shocks and turnover. In particular, workers with higher levels of affective commitment may react to and interpret shocks differently, resulting in lower instances of turnover.

By definition, workers with higher levels of affective commitment have a strong positive emotional attachment to their organization. This attachment derives from an involvement in and identification with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). As such, the roots of affective commitment can be traced directly to the organization while external factors likely have little to do with the development of this type of commitment. This distinction is important when it comes to examining the potential role that affective commitment may play in the shock-turnover relationship. As noted by Lee and Mitchell (1994) in their original conceptualization of the unfolding model, shocks can take many different forms. The only "must have" trait for an event to be considered a shock is that it must lead to turnover-based deliberations that result in a stay-quit decision.

A common distinction that is made amongst shock types is the division between organization-related and non-organization-related shocks (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005; Lee et al., 1999). An example of an organization-related shock would be getting into an argument with a co-worker. An example of a non-organization-related shock would be winning the lottery. In terms of affective commitment, organization-related shocks are of particular importance. Due to the shared focus on the organization, affective commitment may be more likely to buffer the effects of organization-related shocks as opposed to non-organization-related shocks. This buffering may happen in how a highly affective committed worker interprets organizational shocks as opposed to non-organizational shocks. With organizational shocks, a worker with high affective

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commitment may be able to justify events as "just part of the organization." The cliché of "you have to take the good with the bad" is a fitting example. Borrowing from social psychological research, Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory eloquently explains the process underlying this "alternate interpretation." Even though a particular organizational shock is unpleasant, the overwhelming emotional attachment to the organization provides the necessary means for buffering such an event. On the other hand, non-organizational shocks may be harder to explain away. Due to the fact that non-organizational shocks have no direct tie to an organization, it is unlikely that high affective commitment will serve as a significant buffer against these types of shocks.

As an example, consider a worker that has just engaged in a verbal confrontation with a co-worker. For many people, this event may be interpreted as a representation of the work environment or type of co-workers an organization employs. In other words, an organizational shock is interpreted as a direct reflection on the organization. Accordingly, this event may result in turnover deliberations (shock). However, for a worker with a high level of affective commitment, the shock may be interpreted differently. Though a verbal confrontation is likely to be perceived as troubling to most workers, a high level of affective commitment may actually alter the way the shock is interpreted. Due to the fact that high AOC workers already harbor a positive attachment to and identification with their organization, shocks that are organizationally focused may be examined in light of the existing positive affect. On the other hand, non-organization based shocks may not receive such benefits due to a lack of shared focus. For example, the birth of a child may result in many workers examining their current job situation. Things such as pay, flexible work hours, and proximity become more important when a family must be considered.

Having positive affect towards an organization is unlikely to alter the way in which this type of shock is interpreted. While justifying an organizational shock is possible, justifying a shock external to an organization is far less likely. Based on this reasoning, I offer the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1. The positive relationship of organizational shocks with turnover is moderated by AOC such that the relationship is weaker when AOC is high versus low.

NOC as a moderator of shock–turnover relations. As defined by commitment researchers, normative commitment derives from a felt obligation to stay with an organization that is grounded in a sense of morality (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Much like affective commitment, normative commitment is typically treated as a binding force that directly influences turnover. While there is truth to that line of thought, limiting normative commitment to only its direct effects on turnover does not tell the whole story. Normative commitment may also moderate the shock-turnover relationship.

As discussed previously, research on the unfolding model typically classifies shocks according to a pre-defined taxonomy (e.g., Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). While this taxonomy differs from study to study, one of the most common distinctions is between organization-related and non-organization-related shocks. Making such distinctions is necessary in many cases, including the current study (see Hypothesis 1). However, differentiating between types of shocks is only necessary if theory calls for it. In the case of normative commitment, making such distinctions is neither required, nor appropriate due to the underlying forces behind normative commitment. As defined by Meyer et al. (2002), normative commitment is often framed as a sense of "ought to." This loyalty is grounded in a sense of morality that goes beyond a worker's organization. Put

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another way, while affective commitment is derived from and directed towards the organization, normative commitment is derived from moral groundwork that is not limited to organization-only events. Based on this definition of normative commitment, an argument can be made that workers with high levels of normative commitment are likely to be buffered against all types of shocks. The moral obligation felt by these workers should not be swayed by specific types of shocks because these workers should still feel that they "ought to" stay with their organization because it is the right thing to do (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Using the same example from the first hypothesis, imagine a worker that has just engaged in a verbal confrontation with a co-worker. Most workers would find such an event to be jarring, maybe even to the point of deliberating a stay-quit decision. For a worker with a high level of NOC, this shock may be interpreted differently. While the event may still result in turnover deliberations, a high NOC worker is likely to remain employed due to their moral obligation to stay. The same ought to hold true for the non-organizational shock example of child birth. Though this event may result in a stay-quit decision, workers with high levels of NOC should be more likely to stay because they "ought to". Put another way, no matter the origin of a shock, workers with high levels of NOC should maintain a felt obligation to remain with their organization. Therefore, I offer the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2. The positive relationship of normative shocks with turnover is moderated by NOC such that the relationship is weaker when NOC is high versus low.

COC-EE as a moderator of shock–turnover relations. Continuance commitment based on economic exchanges is a binding force that derives from a desire to extract

economic benefits from one's organization. Like all forms of commitment, COC-EE has been linked to lower levels of turnover via a direct effect (Taing et al., 2011). However, when looked at within the framework of the unfolding model of turnover, it is shortsighted to assume that COC-EE only has direct effects on turnover. In addition to its already established direct effects, it is likely that COC-EE could play a moderating role in the relationship between shocks and turnover. Similar to the first hypothesis, identification of specific shock types is called for when examining the role of COC-EE in the shock-turnover relationship. While a traditional shock taxonomy was appropriate for Hypothesis 1, a more targeted categorization is needed when examining COC-EE.

Continuance commitment based on economic exchanges derives from favorable economic exchange relationship with an organization (Taing et al., 2011). This specific focus on economic benefits needs to be considered when examining the potential role COC-EE plays in the shock-turnover relationship. While the sense of morality found in NOC is likely to cut across all types of shocks, the same is likely not true of COC-EE. Due to the fact that high levels of COC-EE lead to commitment based on benefits an organization affords, shocks that directly attack these benefits are unlikely to be tolerated by workers with high levels of COC-EE. Regardless of where a shock originates, if a shock is economic in nature, it is unlikely to be buffered by COC-EE.

To illustrate this assertion, consider an employee that has experienced two very different shocks. The first shock happened when a worker completed an important project for their boss, but was not given any recognition. The second shock occurred when a worker learned that due to financial hardship, their organization was implementing a 5% pay cut across all employees. To some workers, the first shock may seem more intense

than the second shock. To others, the reverse would be true. However, to a high COC-EE worker, the first shock is likely buffered by the fact that their economic benefits are not changed in any way. That is, even though the lack of recognition may be upsetting, a high COC-EE worker is unlikely to quit due to the fact that their economic exchange relationship with their organization is still desirable. On the other hand, receiving a reduction in pay is a direct attack on the economic exchange relationship with their organization. Therefore, the same high COC-EE worker is unlikely to enjoy any buffering effects when it comes to the second shock. In fact, the opposite may be true as high levels of COC-EE may exacerbate the relationship between economic shocks and turnover.

Though only one example, this illustration is likely to hold true across all shock categories. The only necessary distinction in this case is between shocks that are economic in nature and those that are non-economic. Based on this assessment, I offer the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3. The positive relationship of economic based shocks with turnover is moderated by COC-EE such that the relationship is stronger when COC-EE is high versus low.

COC-FA as a moderator of shock–turnover relations. Continuance commitment based on few alternatives is characterized as commitment derived from a perceived lack of alternative employment opportunities (Taing et al., 2011). Workers with higher levels of COC-FA maintain commitment to their organization more out of a matter of necessity than desire. While most types of commitment could be classified as "positive," some researchers have linked this few alternatives type of commitment to less than desirable

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workplace outcomes (McGee & Ford, 1987; Taing et al., 2011). Though this reputation is somewhat grounded in empirical results, make no mistake that commitment, regardless of its form, is a binding force that makes turnover less likely. This distinction applies to all forms of commitment; no matter where it derives from due to the fact that turnover is the focal behavior of interest for commitment researchers. As such, it seems likely that while COC-FA will reduce turnover via a direct effect, attention ought to be paid to the potential for COC-FA to reduce turnover via a moderating role. In particular, the moderating role that COC-FA plays in the shock-turnover relationship of the unfolding model warrants examination.

In line with Hypotheses 1 and 3, it is likely that COC-FA may moderate only certain types of shocks. Rather than discussing the numerous types of shocks COC-FA should moderate, it is easier to identify the particular type of shock that this type of commitment may not moderate. Described as feeling of being stuck ("have to") in their current organization, a worker with high levels of COC-FA remains with their organization due to a lack of reasonable job alternatives. While this may seem like a negative form of commitment, the fact remains that all types of commitment reduce turnover. However, in a moderating role, COC-FA may not buffer the effects of all types of shocks. In particular, those shocks which serve to increase the pool of real job alternatives are unlikely to be buffered by high levels of COC-FA. Examples include receiving an unsolicited job offer or having a job application unexpectedly accepted by a competing company.

To illustrate how a worker with high levels of COC-FA may interpret shocks uniquely, consider a worker that has experienced two different shocks. The first shock

consists of the worker learning that their company has implemented a 5% pay reduction for all employees. While this event is likely to cause any employee to consider quitting, for a worker with high levels of COC-FA, such a decision is unique. Due to the notion that there are no realistic job alternatives, a high COC-FA worker that experienced this first shock is unlikely to turnover. Instead, this worker is more likely to interpret the event as being unpleasant, but with no real alternatives there is no use getting too upset over it. On the other hand, the second shock that this worker experiences consists of a having a job application unexpectedly accepted by an outside organization. As with most workers, receiving a job offer may cause turnover deliberation. However, because this shock results in a direct attack on the base of COC-FA, workers with high levels of COC-FA are unlikely to reap any buffering benefits in terms of the shock-turnover relationship. Instead, high levels of COC-FA may actually exacerbate the effects of job alternative shocks on turnover. Based on this line of reasoning, I offer the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4. The positive relationship of job alternative shocks and turnover is moderated by COC-FA such that the relationship is stronger when COC-FA is high versus low.

Interplay of Shocks and Organizational Commitment for Predicting Alternative Outcomes. While turnover is clearly the focus of the unfolding model, more recent research has searched for new ways in which the model can be applied (Burton et al., 2010; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). One such way is to examine what happens when a worker experiences a shock, but decides to stay rather than turnover. In this case, looking at alternative withdrawal outcomes has proven to be a promising line of research (Burton et al., 2010). In fact, researchers have found that experiencing distressful events

(shocks) can lead to any number of withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism (Taris et al., 2002), poorer task performance (Greenberg, 1990), and turnover intentions (Burton et al., 2010). While interesting in their own right, the focus of the current paper is not to establish the direct effects of shocks, but instead to examine how these effects are moderated by a workers level of organizational commitment. To be more precise, how a workers pre-existing level of organizational commitment buffers the effects of shocks on withdrawal behaviors for those workers that decide to stay with their current organization. In doing this analysis, it is important to differentiate between the various forms of commitment.

AOC as a moderator of shock-alternative outcome relations. As per Allen and Meyer's (1990) seminal work, affective commitment is characterized by an emotional attachment to and involvement in one's organization. As discussed previously, affective commitment is almost always found to lead to lowered levels of withdrawal behaviors as well as increased levels of task performance (Meyer et al., 2002). While the direct effects of affective commitment are impressive, they may not capture the entire picture. Similar to the first hypothesis, it is possible for affective organizational commitment to play the role of a moderator within the bounds of the unfolding model. However, unlike the first hypothesis, the focus is now on the potential for affective commitment to moderate the relationship between organizational shocks and alternative workplace outcomes for those workers that do not turnover. As noted by Burton et al. (2010), within the unfolding model there are instances where workers follow one of the paths laid out by Lee and Mitchell (1994), but decide not to turnover. In these situations, researchers have found that workers are likely to withdraw in ways other than turnover (e.g., Hanisch et al.,

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1998). In these situations, turnover would not be the focal variable of interest, but instead, alternative outcomes would take its place (e.g., turnover intentions, absenteeism, and task performance). Due to the strong emotional bond that underlies affective organizational commitment, it is plausible that the relationship between organizational shocks and these alternative withdrawal outcomes is reduced within high affective commitment workers.

As research has shown, the emotional bond associated with affective commitment is a powerful force not easily broken (e.g., Meyer et al., 2002). Cognitive dissonance theory accounts for why this may be the case. According to this theory, when a strongly held belief is confronted with conflicting information, the incoming information may be interpreted as to not contradict the original belief (Festinger, 1957). In terms of the unfolding model, when workers decide to stay with their organization, high affective commitment workers will be more likely to interpret organizational shocks such that they do not result in a negative attitude towards the organization. In other words, these high affective commitment workers are more likely to put a positive spin on organizationally originating shocks. For example, take a worker that experienced a shock resulting from a missed promotion. One way to interpret this shock is that the organization picked the wrong person for the job, or does not recognize the effort of this worker. However, the positive nature associated with high affective commitment would result in a worker that is more likely to interpret this shock as a challenge to be overcome. This interpretation reduces the workers cognitive dissonance while still addressing the shock. As such, there is reason to believe that high levels of AOC may actually increase task performance after experiencing an organizational shock. On the other hand, while turnover intentions and absenteeism may not necessarily decrease, AOC may still serve as a buffer against

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increases. This is due to the fact that by putting a positive spin on the organizational shock, the worker has effectively reduced the basis for increasing turnover intentions and absenteeism. Therefore, I offer the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5. For workers that do not turnover, the relationship of organizational shocks with (a) task performance (negative), (b) turnover intentions (positive) and (c) absenteeism (positive) is moderated by AOC such that these relationships are weaker when AOC is high versus low.

NOC as a moderator of shock-alternative outcome relations. Defined as a sense of moral obligation to remain with an organization, normative commitment is often found to relate to lowered levels of withdrawal behaviors, albeit not to the magnitude of affective commitment. Even so, meta-analytic findings have provided evidence to support the notion that normative commitment does indeed have some desirable direct effects (see Meyer et al., 2002). However, the effects of normative commitment may not be relegated to only the direct type. Like Hypothesis 2, normative commitment may play a moderating role in the shock-outcome relationship. However, in this instance normative commitment may moderate the shock-alternative outcome relationship for workers that decide to stay with their organization. Remember that within the unfolding model of turnover, there are outcomes in which a worker decides to stay with their organization. Given this choice to stay, recent research has suggested that workers may express withdrawal by alternative means such as increased absenteeism (e.g., Taris et al., 2002). In other words, the effects of shocks do not end with a stay/quit decision. Fortunately, there may be certain constructs that can help buffer against these undesirable alternative outcomes. Due to the felt obligation that is grounded in sense of morality typically

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identified as the key driving force behind normative commitment, it is possible that the relationship between organizational/non-organizational shocks and alternative outcomes will be reduced for workers with high levels of normative commitment.

Due to the sense of morality that underlies normative commitment ("I ought to because it is the right thing to do"), workers with a high level of normative commitment may be more likely to view alternative withdrawal behaviors as morally questionable acts. Stated another way, the moral fiber that is at the heart of normative commitment may actually serve as a buffer against workers acting out to vent frustrations. As a result, these workers, due to their strong moral foundation, will be less likely to engage in certain behaviors such as increased absenteeism or decreased task performance. For example, when a worker is passed over for a promotion but decides to stay with their organization, it would be very easy for that worker to take out any frustrations by lowering their task performance or increasing their absenteeism. However, if the worker exhibits high levels of normative commitment, they will (by definition) have a higher moral standard that will preclude engaging in such morally reprehensible behaviors. On the other hand, these workers may actually see increases in turnover intentions. Even though increasing absenteeism and decreasing job performance could be seen as morally "wrong" because they actually hurt an organization, increasing thoughts of turnover is not necessarily an act detrimental to an organization. In the long term, these thoughts may manifest themselves into actual turnover (though not necessarily), but in the short term they may serve as an easy way for a worker (moral or not) to vent frustration without hurting the organization outright. Based on this line of reasoning, I offer the following hypothesis.

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Hypothesis 6. For workers that do not turnover, the relationship of normative

shocks with (a) task performance (negative), (b) absenteeism (positive) and (c) turnover

intentions (positive) are moderated by NOC such that the relationships for (a) and (b) are

weaker and the relationship for (c) is stronger when NOC is high versus low.

COC-EE as a moderator of shock-alternative outcome relations. Workers high

on continuance organizational commitment based on economic exchanges (COC-EE) are

characterized as striving to accrue as many desirable economic benefits as possible from

their employer (Taing et al., 2011). As such, workers with a high level of COC-EE are

likely to maintain membership to their organization in order to continue collecting the

economic benefits that they desire and perceive as obtainable. In addition to making

turnover less likely, researchers have found that COC-EE is linked with desirable

organizational outcomes such as increased task performance ($r = .41$) and decreased

turnover intentions ($r = -.51$) (Taing et al., 2011). Though these findings are promising

for the future of commitment research, they only tap the direct effects that COC-EE could

have on withdrawal outcomes. Like affective commitment and normative commitment,

COC-EE may also play the role of a moderator in the relationship between shocks and

alternative workplace outcomes.

The desire to accrue favorable economic benefits is at the core of COC-EE. As

discussed in Hypothesis 3, this desire is likely to exacerbate the effects of economic

based shocks on turnover. However, once a worker has rendered a quit-stay decision,

there may be additional workplace outcomes that high levels of COC-EE could affect.

While many workers may decrease task performance after facing a shock and deciding to

stay, those workers with high levels of COC-EE may be less likely to see such declines.

This is due to the underlying desire to maximize the economic exchange relationship with their organization. As task performance is often tied to (or can be perceived as such) economically desirable outcomes such as raises and promotions, workers with high levels of COC-EE would be hesitant to reduce their task performance as a means of acting out their frustration. Instead, it is more likely that these high COC-EE workers may act out through other means such as increased absenteeism and turnover intentions. Though excessive absenteeism could be viewed as negatively affecting potential economic benefits (e.g., less likely to be targeted for promotion), the relationship is less direct than the task performance-economic benefit relationship. Turnover intentions are unlikely to have any effect on economic benefits due to the fact that they are internal cognitions that an employer is unlikely to be aware of.

As an example, imagine a worker with high levels of COC-EE that has experienced an economic shock and decided to remain with their organization. In terms of turnover intentions, this worker with high levels of COC-EE may begin to examine alternative employment opportunities in search of more desirable benefits. Along the same lines, this worker may begin taking extra sick days or using vacation time he/she would otherwise bank. Due to the fact that the underlining drive for this workers' commitment is under attack, he/she may act out by increasing levels of less-visible withdrawal behaviors. As such, I offer the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 7. For those workers that do not turnover, the relationship of economic based shocks with (a) task performance (negative), (b) absenteeism (positive), and (c) turnover intentions (positive) are moderated by COC-EE such that the relationship for (a)

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is weaker while the relationships for (b) and (c) are stronger when COC-EE is high versus low.

COC-FA as a moderator of shock-alternative outcome relations. Though researchers consistently conclude the commitment is a positive job attitude, there is some evidence to suggest that a specific type of commitment may be less beneficial (or even harmful) than others. For years, researchers suggested that continuance commitment is a sort of black sheep of the commitment world (McGee & Ford, 1987). However, more recent research has uncovered that when continuance commitment is examined more closely, it is in fact composed of multiple dimensions; only one of which could be considered a black sheep (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Taing et al., 2011). Workers with high levels of this type of continuance commitment, based on lack of alternatives (COC-FA), are characterized as barely maintaining commitment to their organization. Continuing membership out of necessity, these workers have little motivation to perform positive workplace behaviors beyond those deemed absolutely necessary to maintain employment.

According to Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model of turnover, a worker experiences a shock which eventually leads to a turnover decision. However, as researchers have pointed out, when a worker decides to stay with their organization, the effects of shocks may rear themselves via alternative behaviors such as increased turnover intentions and absenteeism or decreased task performance (e.g., Taris et al., 2002). While some forms of commitment may result in residual benefits for these workers, continuance commitment based on few alternatives may actually increase such negative behaviors above what would be normally expected. In other words, COC-FA

may moderate the relationship between job alternative shocks and alternative outcomes such that the relationship is stronger when COC-FA is high versus low. The reasoning for this is that while workers with a high level of COC-FA may be more likely to turnover in the face of job alternative shocks, those that stay are also likely to have little buffering effects left to reduce the increase of alternative outcomes. As these high COC-FA workers are already predisposed to feeling trapped and frustrated with their perceived lack of job alternatives, they may be more likely to interpret a job alternative shock as "the last straw". Though turnover may not result, this "last straw" may result in increased levels of frustration over what would normally be expected. As discussed previously, this frustration may be vented in any number of ways should a worker decide to remain with their organization. While it is unlikely that levels of alternative outcomes will be increased/decreased to the point of termination from an organization, there is reason to believe that an interaction will exist between shocks and COC-FA.

To illustrate this line of reasoning, consider an employee that has experienced a series of job alternative shocks. These shocks include receiving an unexpected job offer or graduating from school. All of these events are likely to be jarring events that could cause an average worker to consider quitting their job. However, if this same worker had a high level of COC-FA, they may not quit due to the fact that they are committed to their organization out of necessity. Though reducing turnover is typically considered a positive, this may not be the case for a high COC-FA worker. Due to the stuck, helpless feeling that is inherent in high COC-FA workers, experiencing these shocks but deciding to remain with an organization may result in elevated levels of certain undesirable workplace outcomes. While remaining with an organization is important to these types of

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workers due to a lack of alternative employment opportunities, they have no emotional

attachment, no moral motivation, nor any economic based incentives to remain.

Therefore, a high COC-FA worker is free to vent their frustrations in ways that other

workers may not. As such, I offer the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 8. For those workers that do not turnover, the relationship of job

alternative shocks with (a) task performance (negative), (b) absenteeism (positive) and (c)

turnover intentions (positive) are moderated by COC-FA, such that these relationships are

stronger when COC-FA is high versus low.

As withdrawal behaviors and task performance are typically found to be directly

related to organizational commitment, it is likely that there will be direct effects of

commitment on turnover, turnover intentions, absenteeism, and task performance. While

the purpose of the current paper is to examine these variables within the framework of the

unfolding model, it is necessary to discuss expectations in terms of direct relationships.

Based on past research (Meyer et al., 2002), I expect that affective commitment will be

negatively related to turnover, turnover intentions and absenteeism while being positively

related to task performance. Normative commitment will likely follow the same pattern

as affective commitment, being negatively related to turnover, turnover intentions, and

absenteeism and positively related to task performance. Based on past research (Meyer et

al., 2002), the relationships between these variables and affective commitment ought to

be stronger than the relationship between normative commitment and these variables.

Along the same lines, continuance commitment based on economic exchanges ought to

be negatively related to turnover, turnover intentions, and absenteeism while being

positively related to task performance (McGee & Ford, 1987; Taing et al., 2011). Finally,

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continuance commitment based on few alternatives should be negatively related to turnover, turnover intentions, and task performance while being positively or unrelated to absenteeism (Taing et al., 2011).

In addition to the above predictions, there is no reason to believe that commitment is impervious to the effects of shocks. Therefore, it is possible that experiencing shocks may influence a worker's level of organizational commitment. Generally speaking, I expect shocks to reduce commitment across the board. The reasoning for this is that, by definition, shocks lead to workers questioning their continued membership within an organization. Commitment, on the other hand, is a binding force that leads to a worker's continued participation in an organization. Shocks act as a push while commitment acts as a pull. As such, the relationship between shocks and commitment may function as workers building up a level of commitment that helps to buffer them against shocks. Once a shock is experienced, it chips away a little bit of that buffer. Once the magnitude of shocks is too great for commitment to filter, turnover or withdrawal behaviors result.

Table 2- Summary of Hypotheses

Commitment as a Moderator of Shock-Turnover Relations

H1. The positive relationship of organizational shocks with turnover is moderated by AOC such that the relationship is weaker when AOC is high versus low.

H2. The positive relationship of normative shocks with turnover is moderated by NOC such that the relationship is weaker when NOC is high versus low.

H3. The positive relationship of economic based shocks with turnover is moderated by COC-EE such that the relationship is stronger when COC-EE is high versus low.

H4. The positive relationship of job alternative shocks and turnover is moderated by COC-FA such that the relationship is stronger when COC-FA is high versus low.

Commitment as a Moderator of Shock-Alternative Outcomes Relations

H5. For workers that do not turnover, the relationship of organizational shocks with (a) task performance (negative), (b) turnover intentions (positive) and (c) absenteeism (positive) is moderated by AOC such that these relationships are weaker when AOC is high versus low.

H6. For workers that do not turnover, the relationship of normative shocks with (a) task performance (negative), (b) absenteeism (positive) and (c) turnover intentions (positive) are moderated by NOC such that the relationships for (a) and (b) are weaker and the relationship for (c) is stronger when NOC is high versus low.

H7. For those workers that do not turnover, the relationship of economic based shocks with (a) task performance (negative), (b) absenteeism (positive), and (c) turnover intentions (positive) are moderated by COC-EE such that the relationship for (a) is weaker while the relationships for (b) and (c) are stronger when COC-EE is high versus low.

H8. For those workers that do not turnover, the relationship of job alternative shocks with (a) task performance (negative), (b) absenteeism (positive) and (c) turnover intentions (positive) are moderated by COC-FA, such that these relationships are stronger when COC-FA is high versus low.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Participants and Procedure

In the current study, survey and record based data were collected from workers at a major global retailer. The retailer used in this study employs more than 2.1 million workers worldwide, including 1.4 million workers within the United States alone. The sample was drawn from four of the company's retail stores located in the Southeastern United States. There were 752 surveys distributed at Time 1 with an initial response rate of 63.8% or 480 employees. Time 2 collections yielded a response rate of 67.9% or 326 employees. Of these 326 employees, 207 were classified as 'stayers' (63.5%) while the remaining 119 were classified as 'leavers' (36.5%). For the 207 employees who remained with the organization, matching supervisor surveys were obtained for 174 employees (84.1% response rate).

Demographic information for workers was as follows: 53.1% were male; 13.4% were ages 19 or less, 26.8% were ages 20-29, 27.1% were ages 30-39, 22.5% were ages 40-49, 8.1% were ages 50-59, 1.7% were ages 60-69, and 0.4% were ages 70 and over; 61.4% were Caucasian, 29.5% were Hispanic, 5.6% were African American, 2.9% were Asian, and 0.6% identified their ethnicity as 'other'; 23.3% had worked six months or less, 23.8% 7-12 months, 23.3% 13-18 months, 24.4%, 19-24 months, 1.9% 25-30 months, 1.0% 31-36 months, 1.0% 37-42 months, 0.6% 43-48 months, and 0.6% 49 months or more; and 2.1% worked eight hours or less, 4.2% worked 9-16 hours, 28.3%

worked 17-24 hours, 34.6% worked 25-32 hours, 30.4% worked 33-40 hours, and 0.4% worked 41 hours or more.

Demographic information for supervisors was as follows: 61.2% were male; 14.0% were ages 20-29, 30.6% were ages 30-39, 34.5% were ages 40-49, 20.7% were ages 50-59, and 0.2% were ages 60-69; 71.3% were Caucasian, 25.6% were Hispanic, 2.3% were African American, and 0.8% were Asian; 8.8% had worked 13-18 months, 18.0% 19-24 months, 16.8% 25-30 months, 12.9% 31-36 months, 15.0% 37-42 months, 14.6% 43-48 months, and 14.0% 49 months or more; and 47.5% worked 25-32 hours, 50.0% worked 33-40 hours, and 2.5% worked 41 hours or more.

It should be noted that even though this sample is made of workers from four separate locations, the stores of interest are located within an approximate range of 24 miles of each other. Additionally, the stores analyzed in this study fall under the same district management, and are governed by a standardized corporate structure and policy. As such, there was no reason to believe that the locations would differ in any significant ways concerning sample composition nor would they be affected by differences in management practices. The sample was made up of approximately equal proportions of employees from across the four sites with 26.3% of the sample coming from Site 1, 27.9% from Site 2, 24.2% from Site 3, and 21.7% from Site 4. In addition, a comparison of mean differences revealed that the sites did not differ based on the following focal variables: AOC $F(3, 476) = .62$, *n.s.*, NOC $F(3, 476) = 1.28$, *n.s.*, COC-EE $F(3, 476) = .91$, *n.s.*, COC-FA $F(3, 476) = .97$, *n.s.*, organizational shocks $F(3, 322) = .98$, *n.s.*, normative shocks $F(3, 322) = .85$, *n.s.*, economic shocks $F(3, 322) = 1.32$, *n.s.*, or job alternative shocks $F(3, 322) = .64$, *n.s.*.

Because not all workers provided both Time 1 and Time 2 data, I also tested whether the two groups (i.e., those that responded to both time points and those that only responded to one) were equivalent with respect to focal variables. Examination of mean differences revealed that the two groups did not differ based on: AOC $t(478) = -1.16$, *n.s.*, NOC $t(478) = .15$, *n.s.*, COC-EE $t(478) = -.08$, *n.s.*, and COC-FA $t(478) = -.16$, *n.s.* Based on these findings, it does not appear that there are any meaningful differences between the subsets of workers found in the general sample.

A longitudinal design utilizing two time points spaced three months apart was implemented in the current study. Participants were recruited through recruitment letters that were distributed to each store via email as well as through word of mouth by local management. Responses were collected through surveys that were returned via pre-paid postage envelopes. Time 1 required participants to fill out a short survey to gather contact information (email/mailing address/phone), basic demographic information (e.g., age), measures of organizational commitment, job embeddedness, and job satisfaction. Time 2 required participants to either fill out a survey identical to Time 1 minus contact information and demographics, or report any shocks they had experienced between Time 1 and Time 2 as well as whether or not they had voluntarily quit in the months between Time 1 and Time 2. Participants that maintained employment in the organization were asked to pass along a short survey to their supervisor. The supervisor survey gathered contact information (email/mailing address/phone), basic demographic information (e.g., age), and a measure of subordinate task performance. Measures of absenteeism were gathered from employee records while turnover was also confirmed via employee records.

A major weakness of longitudinal designs is participant attrition. To help counteract this, a raffle was designed to increase interest in the study and to encourage participants to maintain membership over both time points. Prizes being offered included the following: grand prize of $100 cash, several first prizes of $50 gift cards to the retailer used in the sample, and several consolation prizes of admission tickets to a local amusement park. Each participant was awarded one entry into the raffle for taking a survey at Time 1. At the conclusion of the second time point, a raffle was conducted using a random number generator to select the winners of each prize. Prizes were distributed via mail.

Measures

Participants responded to all items using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree").

Organizational commitment. Affective and normative organizational commitment were measured using Meyer and Allen's (1997) scales. The AOC scale consists of 6 items (Time 1 α = .86; Time 2 α = .84) including "I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization." The NOC scale consists of 6 items (Time 1 α = .86; Time 2 α = .85) including "I would feel guilty if I left my organization now." Continuance organizational commitment was measured using Taing et al.'s (2011) multidimensional scale. Taing et al.'s (2011) scale consists of 6 items (Time 1 α = .85; Time 2 α = .85) that measure COC based on economic exchanges ("I am considering leaving my company because my effort and skills are not rewarded") and 6 items (Time 1 α = .83; Time 2 α = .85) that measure COC based on few alternatives ("I cannot leave my organization until a new opportunity presents itself"). For full scales, refer to Appendices A through D.

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Job satisfaction. Satisfaction with one's job was measured using 3 items (Time 1 $\alpha = .86$; Time 2 $\alpha = .87$) from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis, & Cammann, 1982). An example item is "All in all, I like my job." Refer to Appendix G for full scale.

Job embeddedness. While conceptually similar to organizational commitment due to the attachment orientation shared by both constructs, job embeddedness is in fact theoretically distinct from commitment (Mitchell et al., 2001). Readers should refer to the earlier comparison between these two constructs for specific examples. Even though researchers have noted the differences that exist between these two constructs, it is pertinent to rule out any possible overlap by controlling for one while measuring the other. In terms of the current study, job embeddedness was measured using a shortened version of Mitchell et al.'s (2001) six dimension measure. The effects of job embeddedness were controlled for when testing all hypotheses. Mitchell et al.'s (2001) original scale includes 40 items measuring six dimensions. However, more recent research has adopted a shorter version of the same scale (18 items), which correlates highly with the original version ($r = .92$) and has acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$; Felps et al., 2009; Holtom, Mitchell, Lee & Tidd, 2006). In the current study, $\alpha = .81$ at Time 1 and $\alpha = .85$ at Time 2.

The first dimension, *fit to community* includes three items. An example item is "I really love the place where I live." The second dimension, *fit to organization* includes three items. An example item is "My job utilizes my skills and talents well." The third dimension, *links to community* includes three items. An example item is "My family roots are in this community." The fourth dimension, *links to organization* includes three items.

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An example item is "I am a member of an effective work group" The fifth dimension, *community-related sacrifice* includes three items. An example item is "Leaving the community where I live would be very hard." The sixth dimension, *organization-related sacrifice* includes three items. An example item is "I have a lot of freedom on this job to pursue my goals." Refer to Appendix F for full scale.

Shocks. Over the years, researchers have measured shocks in a number of different ways. This is not surprising considering that Lee and Mitchell (1994) went so far as to suggest utilizing various methods of measuring shocks in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each method. Some researchers have focused on classifying shocks according to a rigid guideline while others have focused solely on one type of shock. For example, Lee et al. (1999) and Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2005) categorized shocks as personal, work-related, or professional. In addition, shocks were further categorized based on the worker's perceived effect of the shock as a continuation, neutral, or discontinuation event. Continuation events make a worker more likely to stay, neutral events have no effect, and discontinuation events make a worker less likely to stay. Finally, shocks were categorized as positive, negative, or neutral. By breaking a shock down into a unique category, these researchers were able to make very specific predictions. However, due to the very narrow classification, many shock categories contained few, if any, participants. For example, in the study by Lee et al. (1999), there were only six individuals with personal/discontinuation/negative shocks. Additionally, Kammeyer-Mueller et al.'s (2005) classification of a shock as either a continuation, neutral or discontinuation event is perplexing as by definition shocks are events that lead

a worker to consider quitting their current job. Therefore, all shocks should be considered discontinuation events.

Another example of how shocks have been measured in the past is a study by Burton et al. (2010). In their study, Burton and colleagues conducted a focus group consisting of interviews with supervisors and subordinates in order to generate a list of common shocks that are experienced by members of that organization. Their conceptualization of shocks followed the more traditional definition of anything that "had caused them to consider leaving." Potential shocks were then coded as either negative or not negative. This step was due to the fact that the researchers were only interested in negative shocks. Finally, a shock total scale score was calculated by adding the number of negative shocks a worker had experienced in any of the predetermined categories. While this method ought to be praised for its focus on their particular sample, it too falls a bit short in that it only examines one category of shocks (i.e., negative). Remember that Lee and Mitchell (1994) themselves have said that there are many types of shocks, but they all have in common the end result of an employee contemplating whether to quit or stay. Therefore, it would seem that research focusing on shocks would be better suited to include all types of shocks as opposed to only negative. This leads to the proposed measure of shocks for the current study.

Though shocks come in many different forms (e.g., expected vs. unexpected, and job-related vs. family-related), all shocks cause employees to evaluate their current employment situation (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). This definition, combined with the fact that the current study makes hypotheses regarding all types of shocks led to the proposed use of a hybrid scale for measuring shocks. Building on ideas used in various shock

measurement scales (see Burton et al., 2010; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005), subjects

that remain with the organization were presented with a checklist of 18 potential shocks

that they may have experienced over the previous 3 months and asked to check any that

applied as well as how many times a particular shock occurred, if more than once. In

addition, participants were given a 'write-in' page on which they could include shocks

not listed in checklist. These shocks were categorized as organizational, economic,

alternative employment based, and normative. A total score was computed for each

participant by summing up scores to reach a total shock score for each category.

Shock type. In order to examine the hypotheses offered in the current study, a

general taxonomy of shocks was created. While past studies have already established

shock taxonomies, they are often too narrowly defined, resulting in an inability to

statistically examine certain hypotheses (see Kammeyer-Mueller, et al., 2005). For the

current study, broad categories were developed that will still allow for examination of the

unique moderating effects of different dimensions of organizational commitment. The

first category identifies shocks that are organization-related. An example of an

organization-related shock would be "Argument with my manager." This organization-

related category is applicable to Hypotheses 1 and 5. The second category of shocks

looks at economically based shocks. An example of an economic shock would be "Lower

than expected raise." These shocks will be used to examine Hypotheses 3 and 7. The

third category of shocks focused on those that were job alternative based. An example of

a job alternative based shock would be "Unexpected job offer." This category will be

used to examine Hypotheses 4 and 8. Recall that Hypotheses 2 and 6 apply to all

remaining shock types, and were identified as 'other' or 'normative'. For a listing of the shocks used in the current study, please refer to Appendix H.

In order to properly categorize shocks, the current study implemented a modified method similar to one used by Burton et al. (2010) to categorize leavers. In their study, Burton et al. (2010) worked with an organization's supervisors and subordinates to develop a list of common reasons workers voluntarily quit. Though it is unlikely that such a list would capture every possible shock, the level of customization ensures that a high percentage of relevant shocks are included. A similar method was used in the current study as a group of two supervisors were contacted via email and asked to produce a list of common reasons that workers quit their organization. These lists were compiled and examined for duplicates as well as non-shock items (e.g., "I just got sick of the job"). The remaining items were redistributed to a new group of two supervisors who analyzed the list and made recommendations concerning additional items as well as issues with remaining items. This second analysis yielded no significant changes, therefore the checklist was finalized. The final shock checklist was composed of six organizational shocks, five economic shocks, two job-alternative shocks, and five 'other' shocks for a total of 18 items. As mentioned previously, there is a chance that using this method will not capture every possible shock. To address this potential drawback, additional space was provided to employees so that they could 'write-in' shocks not included on the checklist. Though this 'write-in' space was provided, only a small percentage of respondents choose to use it (6.13%). Of those that provided 'write-in' responses, most were able to be classified under existing shock categories. This was due to the fact that many 'write-in' shocks were actually explanations of circumstances

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surrounding a particular shock. The remaining 'write-in' shocks were unable to be classified due to the fact that while they were potential reasons a worker would quit, they were not shocks that could be moderated (e.g., "I am moving out of state").

Voluntary turnover. Instances of employee turnover were measured using employee records obtained from supervisors. Three months past study initiation, supervisors were asked to provide a list of employees that had voluntarily quit. In addition, workers were asked a simple yes/no response question "Did you voluntarily quit your job?" This second question was used to validate the organization's turnover assessment. Yes/no responses were then coded for use in analysis. In the event that organizational records did not match participant responses, the participant response was used as the default. The reason for this decision is that it is possible for an employee to be fired due to conscious decisions made by the employee. For example, workers may simply stop showing up to work instead of formally quitting.

Turnover intentions. Turnover cognition was measured using a hybrid 6-item scale (Time 1 $\alpha = .82$; Time 2 $\alpha = .84$) consisting of items developed by Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth (1978) and Mowday, Koberg, and McArthur (1984). An example item is "I am unlikely to leave my job soon". Refer to Appendix E for full measure.

Absenteeism. In order to measure absence, employee records were used to calculate the actual instances of absenteeism. Three months past study initiation, supervisors were asked to provide a list containing the number of days each participant in the study had been absent. It is the policy of this company to distinguish between excused and unexcused absences by means of employee provided documentation. Activities such as jury duty or military reserve duty are classified as excused absences provided the

employee is able to provide their supervisor with documented confirmation of their

participation. Additionally, sicknesses lasting longer than two days are considered

excused only if verifiable documentation is provided from a medical doctor (i.e., note on

doctor's letterhead). If documentation for absences is not provided, any time missed

beyond two days is considered unexcused and is deducted from the worker's annual leave

time as opposed to their sick leave time, provided they have either type. Once a worker

runs out of either sick leave or annual leave, any and all absences are considered

unexcused/unpaid. This classification of absences is completed internally by the

company. For the purpose of the current study, all unexcused absences (unexcused sick

leave and unexcused/unpaid leave) as well as absences charged to annual leave time were

considered voluntary absences while all excused absences (verifiable sick leave,

military/civic duties, etc.) were considered involuntary. The focus of the current study

was on voluntary absences due to the fact that they are more likely to constitute instances

in which an employee openly chooses not to attend work.

Task performance. Supervisors rated their subordinate's task performance using

Williams and Anderson's (1991) 7-item measure ($\alpha = .77$). An example item is "He/she

adequately completed assigned duties." For full measure, refer to Appendix I.

Chapter Four: Results

The current study focuses on the moderating role that organizational commitment plays in the relations of shocks with turnover and other work-related outcomes. Put into the framework most often associated with Baron and Kenny (1986) and their seminal work on moderation, shocks will play the role of predictor, organizational commitment the role of moderator, and turnover/alternative outcomes the role of outcome. As Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004) so eloquently put it, "a moderator effect is nothing more than an interaction whereby the effect of one variable depends on the level of another." In terms of the current study, I am interested in how the level of a worker's commitment moderates the relations of shocks with the outcome of interest. In order to analyze hypotheses speaking to such a relationship, suitable techniques must be utilized depending on the type of variables used.

In the case of the turnover related hypotheses where the outcome variable is dichotomous (stay/leave) while the predictor and moderator variables are continuous, research suggests using a regression model that forces predicted values for the dependent variable to be binary (Huselid & Day, 1991). As Huselid and Day (1991) point out, the importance of using logistic (or logit) regression when binary outcomes are concerned is often overlooked (e.g., Blau & Boal, 1987). While many researchers simply use a traditional linear regression model, this practice ought to be avoided due to the fact that it does not restrict outcomes to a binary (0, 1) bound. As such, using a linear regression

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model may result in predicted values that fall outside of the 0, 1 range (Cohen et al., 2003; Huselid & Day, 1991).

The first step in using logistic regression or hierarchical multiple regression is to center any continuous variables (Aiken & West, 1991; Cohen et al., 2003; Frazier et al., 2004). The primary reason to center the variables is to avoid the issue of multicollinearity that may result from high correlations between predictor/moderator variables and the interaction term that is formed by their product (Cohen et al., 2003). After the predictor (shocks) and moderator (commitment) were centered, a product term was calculated (Frazier et al., 2004). This product term, often referred to as the interaction term, was created by multiplying the centered versions of shocks (predictor) and commitment (moderator). With the predictor and moderator already centered, the product term did not need any further manipulation.

After the continuous variables were centered and the product term was created, statistical software was used to create the regression equation. In step 1, the criterion of interest (outcome) was regressed on the individual continuous variables (predictor and moderator) as well as the covariate (job embeddedness and job satisfaction). Step 2 involved regressing the criterion of interest (outcome) on the product term (predictor*moderator) in addition to variables entered in Step 1. For all workers, moderator data (commitment) from Time 1 was used while predictor and outcome data from Time 2 was used.

Commitment as a Moderator of Shock-Turnover Relations

In order to test the hypotheses offered in this study, support depends on the significance of interaction terms. For Hypothesis 1-4, the first step was to examine the

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pattern of correlations between the predictor, moderator, and outcome in order to establish basic relationships. Next, the *B* weight for the interaction term was examined for both size and significance. A small *B* weight may be statistically significant, but may not be practically significant. One way to examine the practical significance of a statistically significant *B* weight is to calculate a measure of effect size. In logistic regression, researchers often suggest examining the odds ratio (Aiken & West, 1991). The odds ratio simply provides evidence for how large of an effect the predictor has on outcomes. Numbers smaller than one indicate that increasing the predictor by one unit decreases the odds of an outcome. Numbers larger than one indicate that increasing the predictor by one unit increases the odds of an outcome. As such, odds ratios that are much smaller or much larger than one are preferred. To aid in interpreting the significant interactions for Hypotheses 1-4, plots were created using values one standard deviation above and below mean scores (Cohen et al., 2003).

Hypotheses 1-4 concern the potential moderating role that commitment plays in the relationship between shocks and turnover. In order to examine these hypotheses, correlations were first examined to determine if essential relationships were present. Next, logistic regression was used to evaluate the statistical significance of moderating relationships. For Hypothesis 1, both AOC ($r = -.16$, $p < .001$) and organizational shocks ($r = .40$, $p < .001$) were significantly related to turnover. In both cases, the hypothesized direction of correlation was also as predicted. For the complete correlation matrix, refer to Table 3. Following up on the correlations, logistic regression results indicated that there was in fact a significant interaction between AOC and organizational shocks such that AOC buffered against the negative effects of organizational shocks ($B = -.32$, $p <$

.01, Odds Ratio [OR] = .72). It should be noted that while Hypothesis 1 predicted a weaker relation between organizational shocks and turnover when AOC is high, the results indicated that the relationship was actually similar across low (B = .32, $p < .01$, OR = .74) and high levels (B = -.34, $p < .01$, OR = .70) of AOC. However, high levels of AOC were actually associated with *reduced* levels of turnover while low levels were associated with increased levels of turnover. Based on these results, partial support was found for Hypothesis 1. For full regression results for Hypothesis 1, please refer to Table 4. A graphical representation of the significant interaction can be found in Figure 1.

Table 3- Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables

	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	AOC- T1	(.86)					
2	NOC- T1	.56*	(.86)				
3	COC- EE- T1	.11*	.37*	(.85)			
4	COC- FA- T1	-.25*	-.12*	-.25*	(.83)		
5	Job Embeddedness- T1	.29*	.26*	.06	.17*	(.81)	
6	Turnover Intentions- T2	-.24*	-.24*	-.15*	.25*	.21*	(.82)
7	Job Satisfaction- T1	.48*	.32*	.21*	-.46*	.18*	-.16*
8	Task Performance- T2	.18*	.22*	.28*	-.57*	-.24*	-.36*
9	Absenteeism- T2	-.25*	-.20*	-.15*	.26*	.01	.33*
10	Org Shock- T2	.09	-.06	-.03	-.17*	.05	.22*
11	Norm Shock- T2	.26*	.07	.04	.02	.21*	.15*
12	Econ Shock- T2	.01	-.07	.05	-.19*	-.10*	.25*
13	Job Alt Shock- T2	-.11*	-.12*	-.01	.08	-.09	-.05
14	Turnover- T2	-.16*	-.26*	-.15*	-.13*	-.06	–
	Mean	3.08	2.60	2.74	2.75	2.99	3.32
	SD	1.05	.92	.94	.94	.70	1.20

Note: $N = 480$ for T1 variables; $N = 207$ for self-report T2; $N = 174$ for supervisor report T2; and $N = 326$ for T2 shocks. AOC = affective commitment; NOC = normative commitment; COC-EE = continuance commitment- economic exchanges; COC-FA = continuance commitment- few alternatives; vAbsenteeism = voluntary absenteeism; Org Shock = organizational shock; Norm Shock = normative shock; Econ Shock = economic shock; Job Alt Shock = job alternative shock; T1 = time 1; and T2 = time 2.
* $p < .05$

Table 3- continued

7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
(.86)							
.12*	(.77)						
-.11*	-.29*	–					
-.24*	-.21*	.13*	–				
-.05	-.20*	.12*	.35*	–			
-.10*	-.24*	.28*	-.01	-.02	–		
-.16*	.05	-.02	.07	.22*	-.10	–	
-.10*	–	–	.40*	.40*	.23*	.29*	–
2.99	3.78	1.86	1.18	.88	.79	.45	.35
1.01	.85	1.42	1.49	1.03	1.30	.81	.48

Table 4- Logistic Regression of Turnover on AOC, Org Shocks, & Interaction

Predictors	Turnover T2					
	B	*Wald*	*Odds Ratio*	*B*	*Wald*	*Odds Ratio*
Step 1: Main Effects						
Job Sat	-.23*	3.25	.75	-.20	1.56	.82
Job Embed	-.22	2.95	.76	-.18	.87	.84
AOC T1	-.28*	4.70	.73	-.25*	4.06	.78
Org Shocks T2	.67***	48.71	1.96	.83***	47.22	2.29
Step 2: Interactions						
AOC T1*Org Shocks T2				-.32**	8.23	.72
Model χ^2		66.92***			74.69***	
Model DF		4			5	
-2 Log Likelihood		355.19			347.23	
Nagelkerke R^2		.26			.28	

*Note: *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*
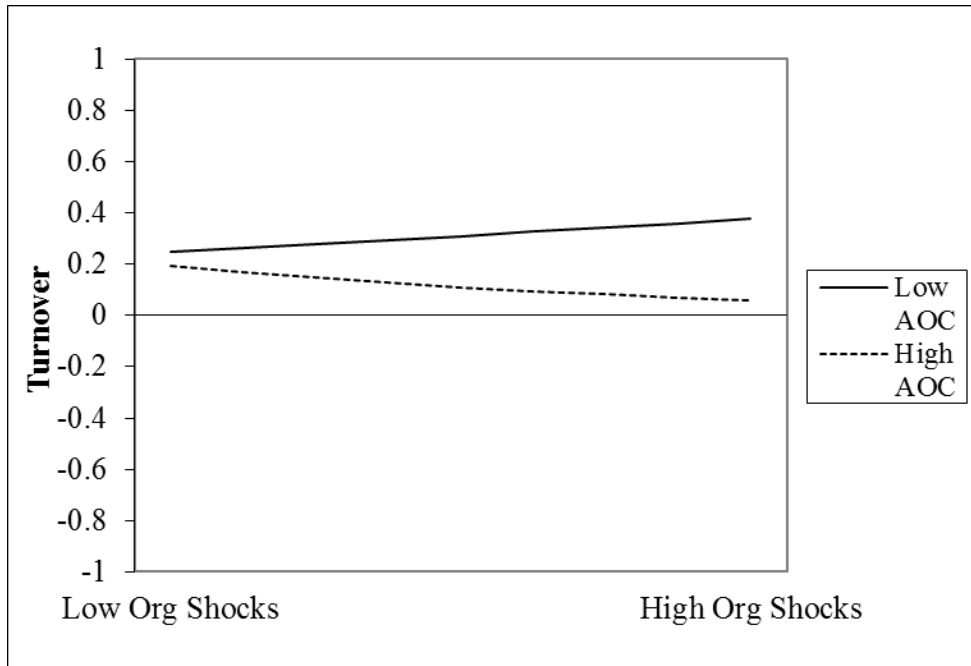
Figure 1. Interaction between organizational shocks and AOC in predicting turnover.

For Hypothesis 2, both NOC ($r = -.26$, $p < .001$) and normative shocks ($r = .40$, $p < .001$) were significantly related to turnover in the hypothesized direction. Logistic regression results indicated that there was a significant interaction between NOC and normative shocks such that NOC buffered the negative effects of normative shocks ($B = -.39$, $p < .05$, $OR = .68$). Low levels of NOC were associated with increased turnover ($B = .22$, $p < .01$, $OR = 1.21$) while high levels of NOC were not significantly associated with turnover ($B = -.02$, *n.s.,* $OR = .98$). Based on these results, support was found for Hypothesis 2. Full regression results for Hypothesis 2 can be found in Table 5. A graphical representation of the significant interaction can be found in Figure 2.

Table 5- Logistic Regression of Turnover on NOC, Norm Shocks, & Interaction

Predictors	Turnover T2					
	B	*Wald*	*Odds Ratio*	*B*	*Wald*	*Odds Ratio*
Step 1: Main Effects						
Job Sat	-.14	.74	.86	-.13	.71	.88
Job Embed	-.06	.08	.94	-.09	.18	.92
NOC T1	-.82***	26.08	.44	-.80***	24.09	.45
Norm Shocks T2	1.08***	52.26	2.93	1.23***	50.97	3.41
Step 2: Interactions						
NOC T1*Norm Shocks T2				-.39*	5.18	.68
Model χ^2		93.95***			100.23***	
Model DF		4			5	
-2 Log Likelihood		330.94			326.65	
Nagelkerke R^2		.34			.37	

*Note: *p < .05; *** p < .001*
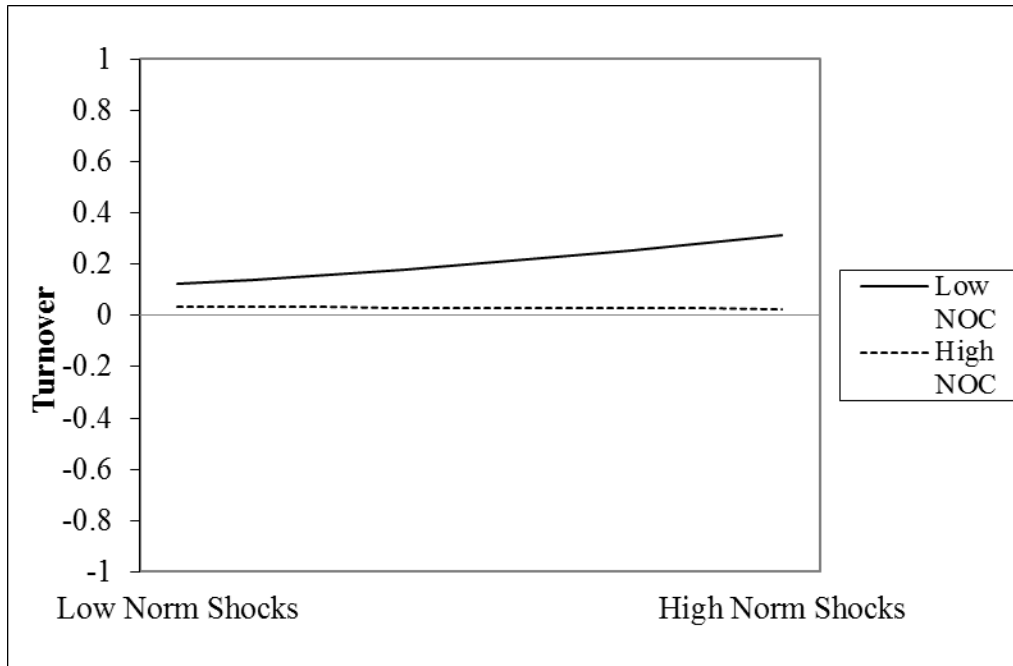
Figure 2. Interaction between normative shocks and NOC in predicting turnover.

Hypothesis 3 predicted an interaction between COC-EE and economic based shocks in predicting turnover. Correlation results revealed that both COC-EE ($r = -.15$, $p < .001$) and economic shocks ($r = .23$, $p < .001$) were significantly related to turnover in the predicted directions. However, logistic regression results indicated that COC-EE did not significantly interact with economic shocks to predict turnover (B = -.05, *n.s.,* OR = .96). As such, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Full regression results for Hypothesis 3 are found in Table 6.

Table 6- Logistic Regression of Turnover on EE, Econ
shocks, & Interaction

Predictors	Turnover T2					
	B	*Wald*	*Odds Ratio*	*B*	*Wald*	*Odds Ratio*
Step 1: Main Effects						
Job Sat	-.18	1.92	.81	-.18	1.83	.82
Job Embed	-.16	.84	.85	-.16	.91	.85
EE T1	-.31*	5.60	.73	-.30*	4.91	.74
Econ Shocks T2	.39***	17.53	1.47	.40***	17.43	1.49
Step 2: Interactions						
EE T1*Econ Shocks T2				-.05	.29	.96
Model χ^2		26.02***			26.31***	
Model DF		4			5	
-2 Log Likelihood		399.86			398.57	
Nagelkerke R^2		.10			.11	

Note: *p < .05; *** p < .001

For Hypothesis 4, an interaction between COC-FA and job alternative shocks was

predicted such that higher levels of COC-FA would magnify the effects of job alternative

shocks on turnover. Correlations revealed that both COC-FA (p = -.13, $p < .01$) and job

alternative shocks ($r = .29$, $p < .001$) were significantly related to turnover. Additionally,

the direction of these relationships was as hypothesized. Logistic regression results

indicated a significant interaction between COC-FA and job alternative shocks such that

COC-FA actually magnifies the effects of job alternative shocks on turnover (B = .43, *p*

<.01, OR = 1.53). Low levels of -FA were associated with increased turnover (B = .21, *p*

< .01, OR = 1.19) while high levels of –FA were associated with even greater increases in

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turnover (B = .53, $p < .01$, OR = 1.79). Based on these results, Hypothesis 4 was supported. For full logistic regression results for Hypothesis 4, please refer to Table 7. Graphical representation of significant moderation can be found in Figure 3.

Table 7- Logistic Regression of Turnover on FA, Job Alt Shocks, & Interaction

Predictors	Turnover T2					
	B	Wald	Odds Ratio	B	Wald	Odds Ratio
Step 1: Main Effects						
Job Sat	-.17	1.56	.83	-.14	.73	.87
Job Embed	-.16	.89	.85	-.14	.69	.87
FA T1	-.18	1.89	.83	-.21	2.51	.81
Job Alt Shocks T2	.84***	22.27	2.32	.85***	22.20	2.34
Step 2: Interactions						
FA T1*Job Alt Shocks T2				.43**	7.29	1.53
Model χ²		31.62***			39.00***	
Model DF		4			5	
-2 Log Likelihood		393.26			382.88	
Nagelkerke R²		.13			.16	

*Note: **p < .01; *** p < .001*

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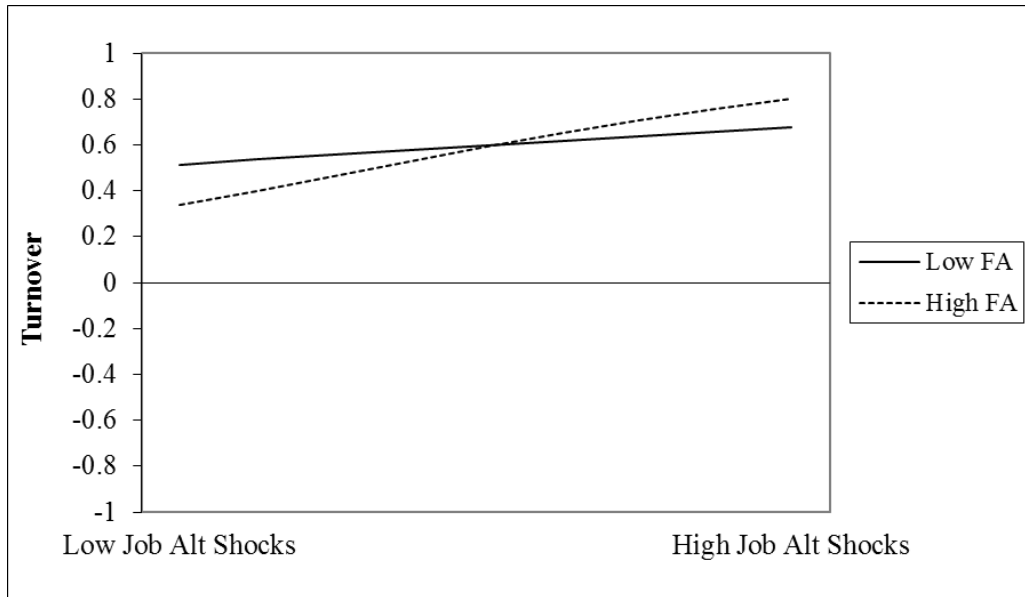
Figure 3. Interaction between job alternative shocks and FA in predicting turnover.

Commitment as a Moderator of Shock-Alternative Outcome Relations

For the non-turnover related hypotheses, research suggests that the use of a continuous variable for the predictor, moderator, and outcome calls for analysis via hierarchical multiple regression (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).Though it would be possible to treat shocks (predictor) and commitment (moderator) as categorical variables, doing so would result in loss of information due to the naturally continuous nature of both variables. Additionally, artificial categorization of continuous variables may lead to a reduction in the power to detect the interaction effects that indicate moderation is present (Aiken & West, 1991). On the other hand, some researchers have found that artificially grouping continuous variables can lead to Type I errors when using hierarchical multiple regression (MacCullum, Zhang, Preacher, & Rucker, 2002). Combining these findings, the predictor (shocks), moderator (commitment), and outcomes were treated as continuous variables.

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For Hypotheses 5-8, the first step was to examine correlations between the predictor, moderator and outcome to establish basic relationships. Next, the β weight for the interaction term (moderator effect) was examined for both size and statistical significance (Aiken & West, 1991; Baron & Kenny, 1986; Cohen et al., 2003). In addition, the $\triangle R^2$ for block 2 was examined to see how much extra variance the interaction term added. To aid in interpreting the significant interactions for all hypotheses, plots were created using values one standard deviation above and below mean scores (Cohen et al., 2003).

Hypotheses 5-8 set to examine the potential moderating role that commitment plays in the relationship between shocks and alternative workplace criteria (turnover intentions, task performance, and absenteeism). In order to examine these hypotheses, correlations were first examined to determine if essential relationships were present. Next, hierarchical regression was used to evaluate the statistical significance of moderating relationships. For Hypothesis 5, analyses revealed a significant correlation between AOC and the following workplace criteria: turnover intentions ($r = -.24$, $p < .001$), task performance ($r = .18$, $p < .01$), and absenteeism ($r = -.25$, $p < .001$). The direction of these correlations was consistent with Hypothesis 5. Similarly, significant correlations were found between organizational shocks and the following workplace criteria: turnover intentions ($r = .22$, $p < .001$), task performance ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$), and absenteeism ($r = .13$, $p < .05$). Again, the direction of these correlations was consistent with Hypothesis 5.

Hierarchical regression results revealed that AOC ($\beta = -.32$, $p < .001$) and organizational shocks ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of turnover

intentions on their own, as was the interaction between the two variables ($\beta = -.15$, $p <$ .05, $\triangle R^2 = .02$), though the predicted effect was not exactly as expected. Instead of high AOC simply buffering the effects of shocks on turnover intentions, high levels actually *decreased* turnover intentions ($\beta = -.45$, $p < .001$) when compared with low levels of AOC ($\beta = .40$, $p < .001$) A similar main effects pattern was found for task performance as both AOC ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$) and organizational shocks ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of task performance. However, the interaction between the two was not a significant predictor ($\beta = .10$, *n.s.*, $\triangle R^2 = .01$). For absenteeism, both AOC ($\beta = -.34$, $p < .001$) and organizational shocks ($\beta = .19$, $p < .01$) were significant predictors. In addition, the interaction between these variables was also a significant predictor of absenteeism ($\beta = -.31$, $p < .001$, $\triangle R^2 = .07$) with low levels of AOC having a strong positive relationship ($\beta = .68$, $p < .001$) and high levels of AOC having a small positive relationship ($\beta = .19$, $p < .01$). Based on these results, partial support for Hypothesis 5 was found as statistically significant moderation was found for turnover intentions and absenteeism, but not for task performance. Full regression results for Hypothesis 5 can be found in Table 8. Graphical representations of the significant interactions can be found in Figures 4 and 5.

Table 8- Regression of Work Criteria on AOC, Org Shocks, &
Interaction

Predictors	Work Criteria		
	Turnover Intentions	Task Performance	Absenteeism
Step 1: Main Effects			
Job Sat	-.22***	.19*	-.26***
Job Embed	.14*	-.14*	.00
AOC T1	-.32***	.26***	-.34***
Org Shocks T2	.25***	-.22***	.19**
F	12.13***	9.52***	13.01***
R^2	.18	.13	.16
Step 2: Interactions			
AOC T1*Org Shocks T2	-.15*	.10	-.31***
ΔF	4.99*	1.46	16.35***
ΔR^2	.02	.01	.07

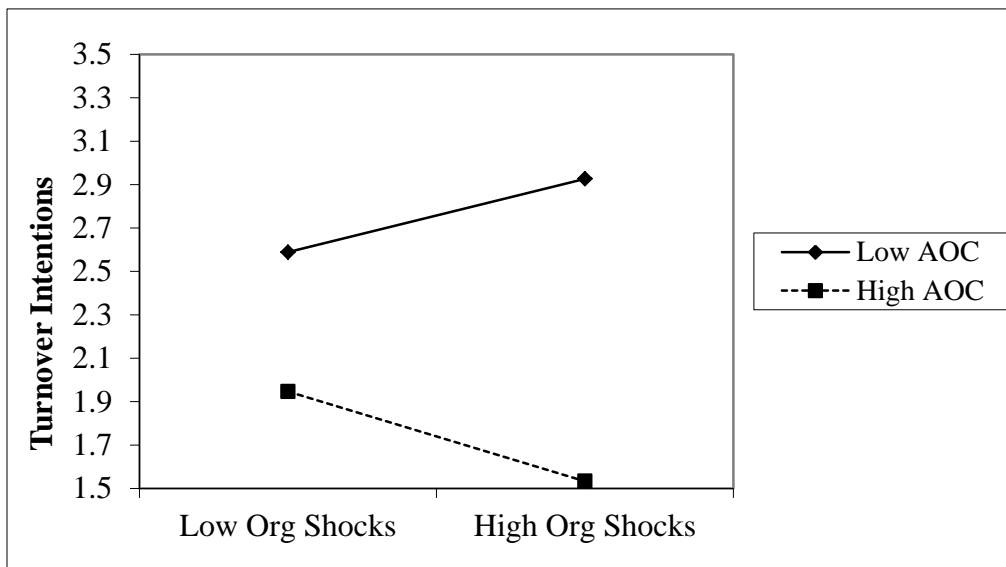*Note:* *$p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Figure 4. Interaction between organizational shocks and AOC in predicting turnover
intentions.
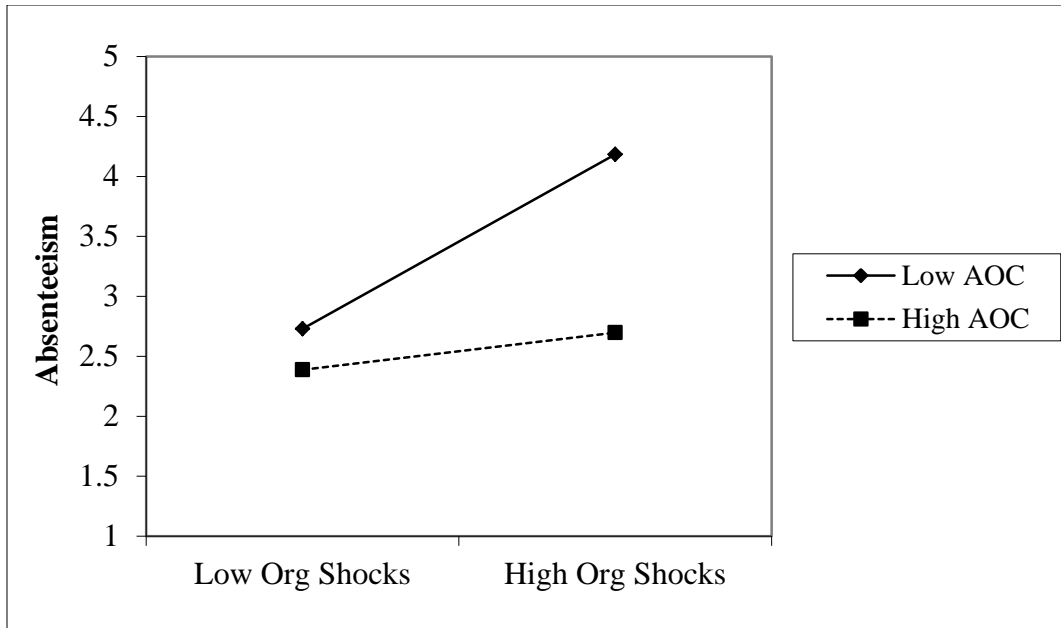
Figure 5. Interaction between organizational shocks and AOC in predicting absenteeism.

For Hypothesis 6, correlation analyses revealed a significant correlation between NOC and the following workplace criteria: turnover intentions ($r = -.24$, $p < .001$), task performance ($r = .22$, $p < .01$), and absenteeism ($r = -.20$, $p < .01$). The direction of these correlations was consistent with Hypothesis 6. Similarly, significant correlations were found between normative shocks and the following workplace criteria: turnover intentions ($r = .15$, $p < .05$), task performance ($r = -.20$, $p < .01$), and absenteeism ($r = .12$, $p < .05$). Again, the direction of these correlations was consistent with Hypothesis 6.

Hierarchical regression results revealed that while NOC ($\beta = -.45$, $p < .001$) and normative shocks ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of turnover intentions on their own, the interaction between the two variables was not a significant predictor of turnover intentions ($\beta = .03$, *n.s.*, $\triangle R^2 = .00$). The same pattern was found for task performance as both NOC ($\beta = .46$, $p < .001$) and normative shocks ($\beta = -.33$, $p < .001$)

were significant predictors of task performance whereas the interaction between the two was not a significant predictor (β = .06, *n.s.,* $\triangle R^2$ = .00). The main effects trend continued for absenteeism with both NOC (β = -.35, p < .001) and normative shocks (β = .26, p < .001) being significant predictors. However, the interaction between these variables was a significant predictor of absenteeism (β = .15, p < .05, $\triangle R^2$ = .02). Oddly, the direction of moderation was opposite of what was hypothesized with high levels of NOC (β = .88, p < .001) leading to an increase in absenteeism versus low levels (β =.67, p < .001). Based on these results, partial support was found for Hypothesis 6 because no statistically significant moderation was found for turnover intentions and task performance, while evidence of significant moderation of absenteeism was found, albeit in the direction opposite of Hypothesis 6. Refer to Table 9 for full regression results. Graphical representation of the significant moderation effect can be found in Figure 6.

Table 9- Regression of Work Criteria on NOC, Norm Shocks, & Interaction

Predictors	Work Criteria		
	Turnover Intentions	Task Performance	Absenteeism
Step 1: Main Effects			
Job Sat	-.25***	.23***	-.23***
Job Embed	.21**	-.20**	.02
NOC T1	-.45***	.46***	-.35***
Norm Shocks T2	.28***	-.33***	.26***
F	16.11***	17.24***	10.22***
R^2	.20	.22	.14
Step 2: Interactions			
NOC T1*Norm Shocks T2	.03	.06	.15*
ΔF	.20	.64	4.78*
ΔR^2	.00	.00	.02

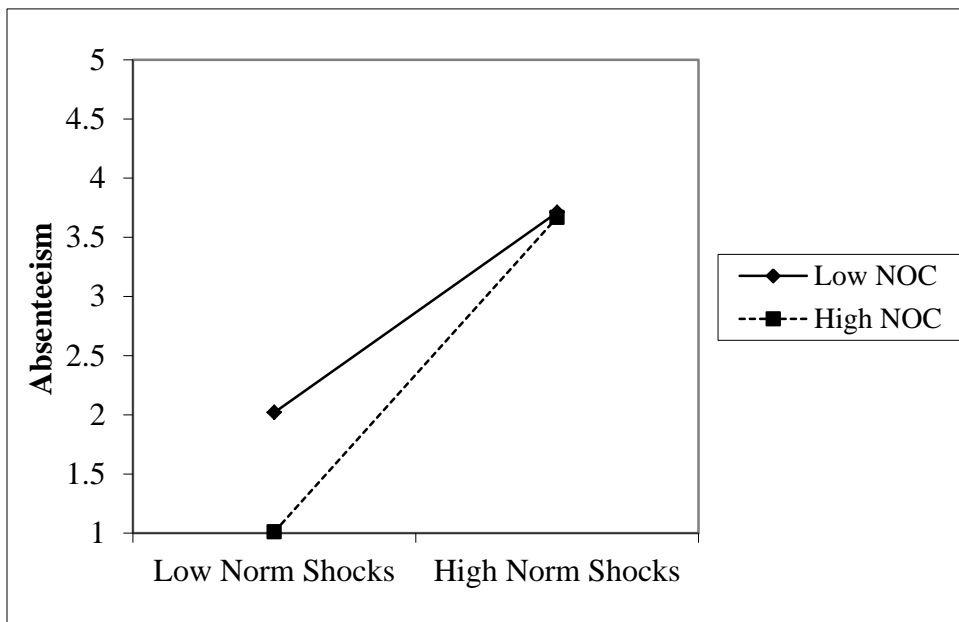*Note: *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

Figure 6. Interaction between normative shocks and NOC in predicting absenteeism.

For Hypothesis 7, correlation analyses revealed a significant correlation between COC-EE and the following workplace criteria: task performance ($r = .28$, $p < .001$) and absenteeism ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$). A non-significant correlation was found between COC-EE and turnover intentions ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$). The direction of these correlations was consistent with Hypothesis 7. Similarly, significant correlations were found between economic shocks and the following workplace criteria: turnover intentions ($r = .25$, $p < .001$), task performance ($r = -.24$, $p < .001$), and absenteeism ($r = .28$, $p < .001$). Again, the direction of these correlations was consistent with Hypothesis 7.

Hierarchical regression results revealed that COC-EE ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$) and economic shocks ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of turnover intentions as was the interaction between the two variables ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$, $\Delta R^2 = .03$). High levels of –EE ($\beta = .79$, $p < .001$) were associated with greater increases in absenteeism when compared with low levels of –EE ($\beta = .62$, $p < .001$). The same pattern was found for task performance as both COC-EE ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$) and economic shocks ($\beta = -.30$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of task performance as was the interaction between the two ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$, $\Delta R^2 = .02$). In this case, high levels of –EE ($\beta = .23$, $p < .01$) were associated with increased task performance while low levels were associated with decreased task performance ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$). For absenteeism, both COC-EE ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .01$) and economic shocks ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors. In addition, the interaction between these variables was also a significant predictor of absenteeism ($\beta = -.15$, $p < .05$, $\Delta R^2 = .02$). It should be noted that the direction of moderation for absenteeism was counter to Hypothesis 7 with high levels of COC-EE ($\beta = -.25$, $p < .01$) leading to decreased absenteeism and low levels leading to increased absenteeism ($\beta =$

.20, $p < .01$). In addition, the strength of the relationship between shocks-task performance was relatively the same across all levels of COC-EE, though the direction of the relationship was positive for high levels of COC-EE. Based on these results, Hypothesis 7 was partially supported as statistically significant moderation was found for turnover intentions, task performance, and absenteeism, albeit the nature of the interaction was counter to expectations in the latter case. Full regression results for Hypothesis 7 can be found in Table 10. Refer to figures 7-9 for graphical representations of significant interactions.

Table 10- Regression of Work Criteria on EE, Econ Shocks, & Interaction

Predictors	Work Criteria		
	Turnover Intentions	Task Performance	Absenteeism
Step 1: Main Effects			
Job Sat	-.13*	.26***	-.14*
Job Embed	.15*	-.16*	-.01
EE T1	-.14*	.33***	-.20**
Econ Shocks T2	.28***	-.30***	.31***
F	8.21***	16.45***	9.96***
R^2	.11	.21	.13
Step 2: Interactions			
EE T1*Econ Shocks T2	.16*	.14*	-.15*
ΔF	5.01*	4.64*	4.98*
ΔR^2	.03	.02	.02

*Note: *$p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*
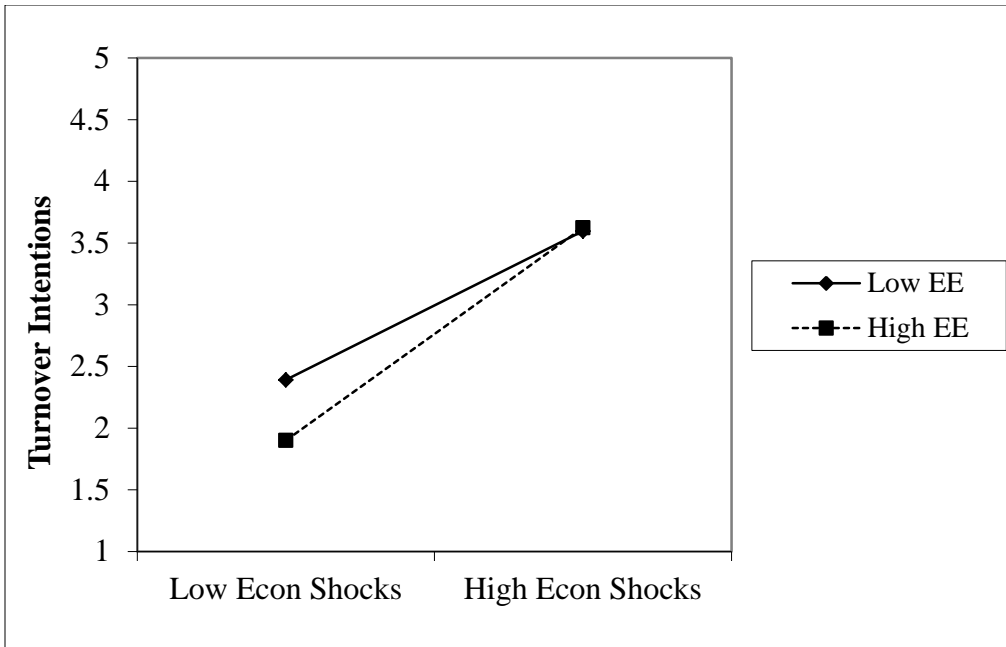
Figure 7. Interaction between economic shocks and EE in predicting turnover intentions.
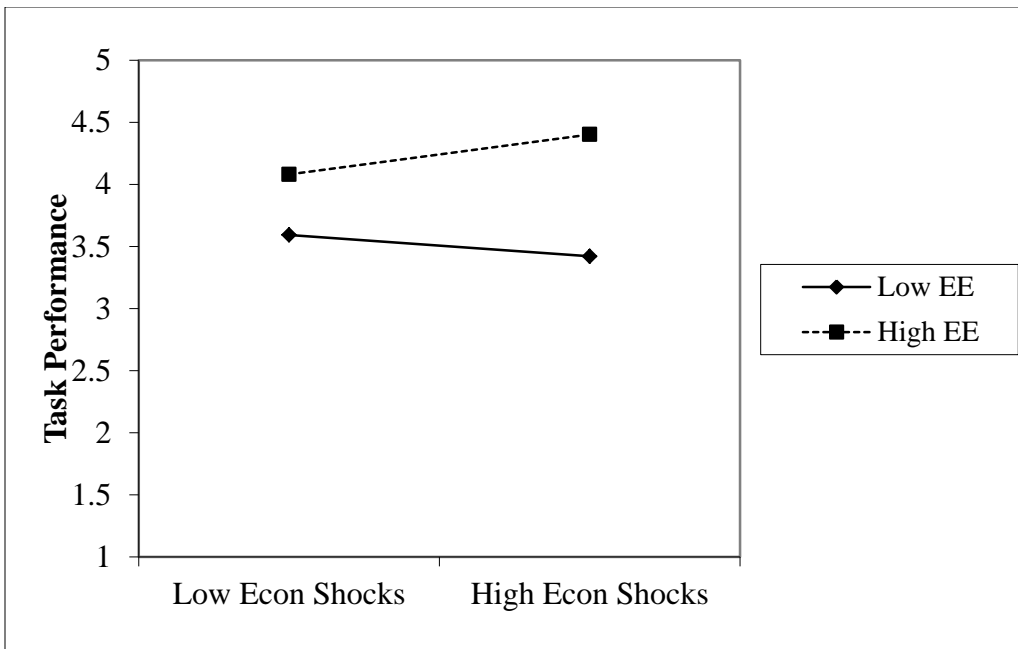
Figure 8. Interaction between economic shocks and EE in predicting task performance.
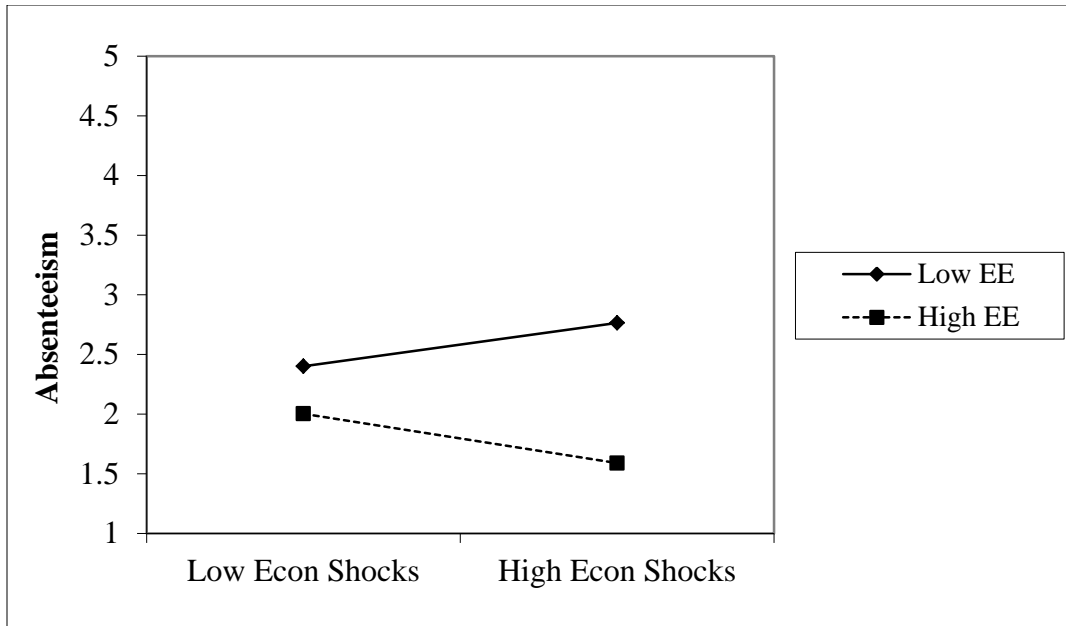
Figure 9. Interaction between economic shocks and EE in predicting absenteeism.

For Hypothesis 8, correlation analyses revealed a significant correlation between COC-FA and the following workplace criteria: turnover intentions ($r = .25$, $p < .001$), task performance ($r = -.57$, $p < .001$), and absenteeism ($r = .26$, $p < .001$). The direction of these correlations was consistent with Hypothesis 8. On the other hand, no significant correlations were found between job alternative shocks and the following workplace criteria: turnover intentions ($r = -.05$, *n.s.*), task performance ($r = .05$, *n.s.*), and absenteeism ($r = -.02$, *n.s.*).

Hierarchical regression results revealed that while COC-FA ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$) was a significant predictor of turnover intentions, job alternative shocks ($\beta = -.07$, *n.s.*) and the interaction between the two variables were not significant predictors of turnover intentions ($\beta = -.05$, *n.s.*, $\triangle R^2 = .00$). The same pattern was found for task performance as COC-FA ($\beta = -.42$, $p < .001$) was a significant predictor of task performance whereas job

alternative shocks (β = .07, *n.s.*) and the interaction between the two was not a significant predictor (β = .02, *n.s.,* $\triangle R^2$ = .00). For absenteeism, COC-FA (β = .20, *p* < .01) was found to be a significant predictor while job alternative shocks (β = -.02, *n.s.*) was a non-significant predictor. The interaction term revealed evidence of significant moderation (β = .15, *p* < .05, $\triangle R^2$ = .02) with high levels having a stronger relationship (β = .55, *p* < .001) than low levels (β = .39, *p* < .001). Based on these results, partial support for Hypothesis 8 was found as no statistically significant moderation was found for turnover intentions or task performance. However, evidence of significant moderation was present for absenteeism. Refer to Table 11 for full regression results. Graphical representation of the significant interaction can be found in Figure 10.

In addition to the hypothesized relationships, exploratory analyses were run to examine the interactions as a whole as they relate to predicting turnover, turnover intentions, task performance, and absenteeism. Due to the exploratory nature of these interactions, no hypotheses were offered. Results can be found in Tables 12 and 13.

Table 11- Regression of Work Criteria on FA, Job Alt Shocks, &
Interaction

Predictors	Work Criteria		
	Turnover Intentions	Task Performance	Absenteeism
Step 1: Main Effects			
Job Sat	-.15*	.21**	-.13*
Job Embed	.11	-.08	-.06
FA T1	.16*	-.42***	.20**
Job Alt Shocks T2	-.07	.07	-.02
F	3.89*	16.79***	3.45*
R^2	.05	.22	.05
Step 2: Interactions			
FA T1*Job Alt Shocks T2	-.05	.02	.15*
ΔF	0.4	0.01	4.12*
ΔR^2	.00	.00	.02

*Note: *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*
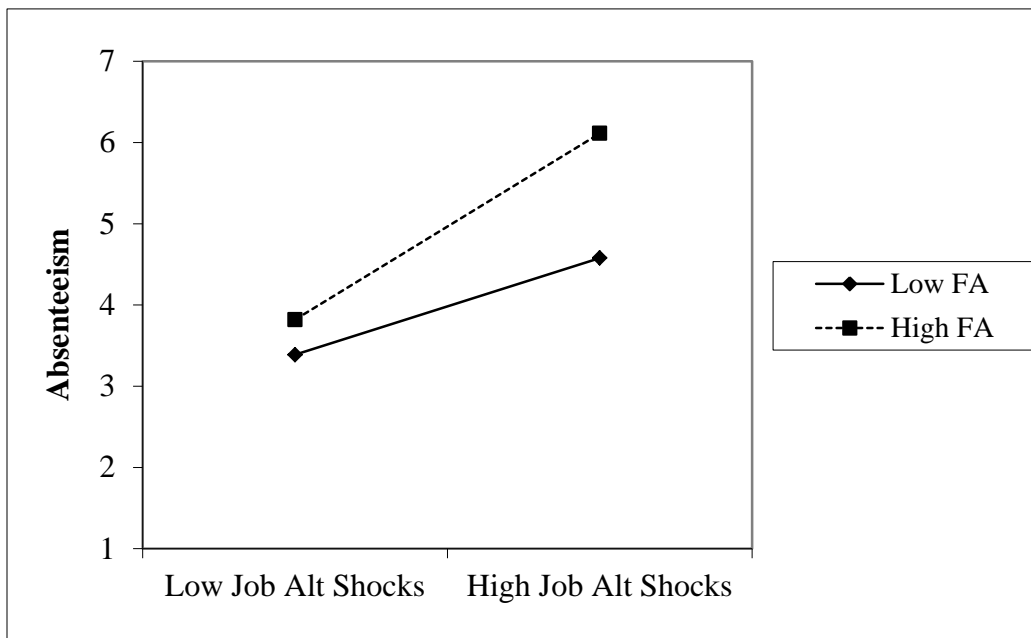
Figure 10. Interaction between job alternative shocks and FA in predicting absenteeism.

Table 12- Exploratory Logistic Regression Analyses

Predictors	Turnover T2					
	B	Wald	Odds Ratio	B	Wald	Odds Ratio
Step 1: Main Effects						
Job Embed	.01	.00	1.01	-.01	.00	.99
Job Satisfaction	-.34	2.21	.71	-.36	2.09	.70
AOC T1	-.37	2.78	.69	-.20	.62	.82
NOC T1	-.23	.75	.80	-.42	2.00	.66
EE T1	-.55**	6.15	.58	-.22	.92	.80
FA T1	-.37	2.96	.69	-.18	.65	.84
Org Shocks T2	.75***	30.34	2.12	.83***	29.19	2.29
Norm Shocks T2	.90***	26.37	2.45	.95***	22.97	2.59
Econ Shocks T2	.60***	20.15	1.82	.67***	21.36	1.95
Job Alt Shocks T2	.90***	20.85	2.46	.91***	10.77	2.50
Step 2: Interactions						
AOC T1*Org Shocks T2				-.13	.95	.876
NOC T1*Norm Shocks T2				-.45*	4.73	.641
EE T1*Econ Shocks T2				-.37**	6.57	.691
FA T1*Job Alt Shocks T2				.37	1.76	1.44
Model X2		166.15***			180.26***	
Model DF		10			14	
-2 Log Likelihood		261.73			247.62	
Nagelkerke R2		0.55			.58	

*Note: *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

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Table 13- Exploratory Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Predictors	Word Criteria		
	Turnover Intentions	Task Performance	Absenteeism
Step 1: Main Effects			
Job Embed	.23***	-.09	-.05
Job Satisfaction	-.13	.45***	.18
AOC T1	-.08	-.17	-.49***
NOC T1	-.40***	-.05	-.05
EE T1	.00	.22**	-.22**
FA T1	-.07	-.42***	-.04
Org Shocks T2	.27***	-.16**	.22***
Norm Shocks T2	.24**	-.17*	.17*
Econ Shocks T2	.23**	-.28***	.32***
Few Alt Shocks T2	.05	-.02	.16*
F	9.01***	15.37***	8.16***
R^2	.32	.45	.29
Step 2: Interactions			
AOC T1*Org Shocks T2	-.13	-.02	-.29***
NOC T1*Norm Shocks T2	-.02	-.01	.09
EE T1*Econ Shocks T2	.12	.11	-.06
FA T1*Job Alt Shocks T2	.13	-.08	.26***
ΔF	7.22***	11.26***	9.20***
ΔR^2	0.03	0.01	0.11

*Note: *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

Chapter Five: Discussion

When examining the role that organizational commitment plays in turnover and other withdrawal-related workplace outcomes, commitment is typically treated as an antecedent. In other words, the direct contribution of commitment to withdrawal behaviors is examined (e.g., Gellatly, Meyer, & Luchak, 2006). While there is little doubt that commitment plays an important 'direct influence' role on withdrawal behaviors, surprisingly little attention has been given to the examination of more indirect influence that commitment may have on withdrawal outcomes. One interesting line of research started by Burton et al. (2010) focuses on the relationship that traditional 'slow-burn' antecedents play within Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model. To date, no research has examined the role that organizational commitment plays in such a model. Understanding and integrating organizational commitment into models of turnover and withdrawal behavior is an important step to fully appreciating the role that commitment plays in the workplace.

The current study set out to accomplish two goals. First, this study aimed to examine the moderating role that organizational commitment plays in the relationship between shocks as defined by Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model and turnover. In doing so, this study went beyond traditional commitment research that tends to examine the relationship between turnover and commitment as a direct causal one. Second, this study set out to examine the role that the various forms of commitment play in the relationship between shocks and withdrawal-related variables for those workers

that do not turnover after experiencing a shock(s). Though both goals examine the moderating role of commitment within Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model, it should be noted that only recently have researchers expanded the unfolding model to apply to other withdrawal-related variables (see Burton et al., 2010). As such, the first goal focuses on the traditional conceptualization of the unfolding model while the second goal focuses on more recent conceptualizations that push the model beyond simply turnover. In the following sections I review my findings and present implications for research and practice.

Commitment as a Moderator of Shock-Turnover Relations

The first goal of the current study was to examine the moderating role that commitment plays in the relationship between shocks and voluntary turnover. Specifically, I expected to find that the various forms of commitment would serve to either buffer against or exacerbate the effects of various forms of shocks. In the following paragraphs I explore the specific hypotheses relating to turnover as the outcome.

Hypothesis #1. Support was found for the first hypothesis, suggesting that affective commitment does in fact moderate the relationship between organizational shocks and turnover. However, the interaction was not precisely as hypothesized. While the predicted outcome was that high levels of affective commitment would reduce the impact of organizational shocks on turnover, the actual outcome supports that notion that while heightened levels of affective commitment do not alter the strength of the organizational shock-turnover relationship it does change the direction of the relationship. In other words, high levels of affective commitment moderate the

relationship between organizational shocks and turnover such that an increase in shocks results in decreased levels of turnover.

While the results for the first hypothesis do not mirror the predicted relationship exactly, I believe that the same line of reasoning used to develop the hypothesis lends itself well to explaining the obtained results. Recall that Hypothesis 1 suggested that organizationally focused shocks are likely to be moderated by AOC primarily due to the shared focus. I predicted that high levels of AOC would help to buffer workers against organizational shocks by altering the way workers interpret those types of shocks. High levels of AOC are associated with feelings of belonging to, identifying with, and having a generally passionate feeling about an organization. When confronted with shocks that attack these feelings, high levels of AOC may actually lead workers to 'explain away' or 'play down' the shocks themselves. This explanation calls on the cognitive dissonance theory posited by Festinger (1957). Applied to the results of the current study, it appears that instead of merely buffering against the effects of organizational shocks, high levels of AOC actually reverse the positive relationship between organizational shocks and turnover. This finding is notable in that it suggests that there are certain cases in which organizational shocks may be beneficial to an organization in terms of reducing turnover.

Hypothesis #2. Support was found for the second hypothesis, suggesting that normative commitment moderates the relationship between normative shocks and turnover. More precisely, the positive relationship between normative shocks and turnover is weakened by high levels of normative commitment. This result lends itself to the idea that normative commitment helps to buffer workers against the effects of normative shocks as they relate to turnover. While this finding is interesting, it should not

be surprising. As predicted, it is likely that the underlining 'ought to' feeling associated with normative commitment acts as a buffering force against normative shocks such that workers feel that staying with their organization is the 'right thing to do' regardless of shocks that they experience. Put another way, high levels of normative commitment actually alter the way in which shocks are interpreted. While low levels of normative commitment result in a positive relationship between shocks and turnover, high levels of normative commitment result in workers merely accepting the shocks and moving forward.

Hypothesis #3. A non-significant β weight was found for the interaction between continuance commitment based on economic exchanges and economic shocks. This suggests that commitment based on economic exchanges is not a significant moderator of the economic shocks-turnover relationship. In light of the predicted moderation relationship, this is an interesting finding. Recall that Hypothesis 3 predicted that high levels of COC-EE would result in an increased incidence of turnover when faced with economic shocks due to the fact that these shocks attack the very base of the commitment. While AOC has an affective component that serves to buffer workers against organizational shocks, COC-EE is more of a 'business decision' commitment, lacking a general affective component.

In explaining the non-significant finding in the current study, perhaps there is a dichotomous, push-pull relationship underlying high levels of COC-EE. On one hand there may be an amplified negative feeling when confronted with economic shocks. After all, high levels of COC-EE are entirely based on positive economic exchanges with an organization. When these exchanges are threatened, it is reasonable to predict an increase

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in the positive relationship between shocks-turnover as levels of COC-EE increase. On the other hand, there may also be an amplified positive feeling when workers with high levels of COC-EE are confronted with economic shocks. Perhaps high levels of COC-EE lead to some workers interpreting economic shocks as challenges to be overcome as opposed to an outright attack. This positive spin on economic shocks may be based on the fact that up until a worker experiences an economic shock, they are very satisfied with the exchange relationship they have with their employer. Once these exchanges are challenged, high levels of COC-EE may lead workers to stay with an organization in the hope of overcoming shocks, regaining lost exchange benefits, or reaching a particular exchange goal they have set for themselves. When this type of moderation is combined with the previously discussed 'exacerbated' moderation, it is likely that a cancellation of moderation effects occurs. This would lead to results similar to the ones obtained in the current study which suggest that COC-EE does not significantly moderate the relationship between economic shocks and turnover.

Hypothesis #4. Full support was found for the fourth hypothesis, as evidenced by the significant interaction term and accompanying interaction graph. As such, it appears that the positive relationship between job alternative shocks and turnover is moderated by continuance commitment based on few alternatives such that higher levels of few alternatives commitment exacerbate the effect of job alternative shocks. This finding is well aligned with the reasoning outlined in the original discussion of Hypothesis 4. To briefly restate, high levels of COC-FA are associated with feelings of being trapped or stuck in a particular organization. Workers with high levels of COC-FA are likely maintain membership in their organization only as long as they lack other viable

employment options. As such, it is not surprising that high levels of COC-FA were found to exacerbate the positive relationship between job alternative shocks and turnover. Those workers with high levels of COC-FA are continually looking for better employment opportunities. When faced with a job alternative shock that seemingly increases employment options, it is understandable that high levels of COC-FA would lead to an increase in the positive job alternative shock-turnover relationship. The results pertaining to Hypothesis 4 support such an assertion.

Commitment as a Moderator of Shock-Alternative Outcome Relations

The second goal of the current study was to examine the moderating role that commitment plays in the relationship between shocks and alternative withdrawal outcomes. Specifically, I expected to find that the various forms of commitment would serve to either buffer against various forms of shocks or, in some cases, actually exacerbate the effects of shocks. In the following paragraphs I explore the specific hypotheses relating to alternative outcomes as the criteria.

Hypothesis #5. Partial support was found for the fifth hypothesis as affective commitment was found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between organizational shocks and turnover intentions as well as between organizational shocks and absenteeism. However, affective commitment was not a significant moderator of the organizational shocks-task performance relationship. In relation to turnover intentions, it should be noted that while the interaction between affective commitment and organizational shocks was significant, the relationship was not exactly as predicted. While Hypothesis 5 predicted a weakened relationship between organizational shocks and turnover intentions when high levels of affective commitment were present, the

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relationship was actually strengthened. Instead of merely maintaining baseline levels of turnover intentions when faced with high levels of organizational shocks, high levels of affective commitment actually resulted in decreased levels of turnover intentions. Similar to Hypothesis 1, it is possible that when faced with organizational shocks, high levels of AOC actually trigger a defensive response such that the affective attachment to the organization is strengthened. This would certainly explain why increased levels of AOC are associated with decreased turnover intentions when faced with organizational shocks.

The finding that high levels of AOC reduce the effect of organizational shocks on increasing absenteeism may be explained within the same framework as turnover and turnover intentions. While high levels of AOC did not *reverse* the direction of the relationship between organizational shocks and absenteeism, it did serve to *reduce* the strength of the relationship when compared to low levels of AOC. As predicted, this finding can likely be explained by concepts found in Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory. High levels of AOC may trigger a reaction in workers when faced with organizational shocks such that the shocks are excused as being 'not a big deal'. Though these incidents may initially result in turnover deliberations due to their shocking nature, cognitive processes may quickly take over and result in a mitigation of their overall impact.

Unlike the previous outcomes, high levels of AOC did not significantly moderate the relationship between organizational shocks and task performance. This finding is perplexing given logic outlined in the previous paragraphs. However, one potential explanation is that while turnover intentions and absenteeism are both outcomes almost entirely in control on the worker, task performance is bounded by several factors outside

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of the worker's control. The primary factor is the actual ability of the worker to improve his/her performance. While workers with high levels of AOC may desire to improve task performance when faced with organizational shocks, they may lack the necessary means to do so. In addition, supervisors tended to rate subordinate performance abnormally high across the board while also showing lower than expected levels of variance. Taken together, it is not surprising that a non-significant interaction term was found for AOC in relation to the organizational shocks-task performance relationship.

Hypothesis #6. Partial support was found for Hypothesis 6 as normative commitment was shown to be a significant moderator of the relationship between normative shocks and absenteeism while no significant moderation was found for shock-turnover intentions or shock-task performance. Interestingly, the direction of the interaction for absenteeism was counter to what was predicted, with high levels of normative commitment actually leading to a stronger normative shock-absenteeism relationship.

The results for Hypothesis 6 are particularly interesting as they generally run counter to the predictions regarding the outcomes of interest. Recall that Hypothesis 6 reasoned that the underlying morality associated with high levels of NOC would result in a reduction of the negative relationship between normative shocks-task performance and the positive relationship between normative shocks–absenteeism. On the other hand, turnover intentions would be a way to vent frustrations without necessarily engaging in acts that could be viewed as immoral. With the current study's results supporting the notion that NOC does not moderate shock-turnover intentions or shock-task performance relations, and moderates the shock-absenteeism relation in the opposite direction, a

plausible explanation must be found. One possibility is that the normative shocks measured in the current study are generally more difficult to moderate. That is, shocks such as "birth of a child" or "personal health issue" may be events that *can* be moderated, but may also be significantly more difficult to moderate than organizational, economic, or job alternative shocks. Though high levels of NOC may result in workers maintaining membership in their organization despite experiencing a normative shock(s), the events themselves are so strong that they may simply overwhelm those that stay with an organization. This would explain why high levels of NOC were unable to significantly moderate the positive relationship between shocks-turnover intentions or negative relationship between shocks-task performance. Examining the events themselves, this may also explain why high levels of NOC were associated with a stronger relationship between shocks-absenteeism. Dealing with health issues, for example, would certainly lead to increased absenteeism, perhaps regardless of NOC. In sum, the results for Hypothesis 6 may best be explained by the measurement of normative shocks as opposed to something fundamentally flawed with the reasoning underlying its predictions.

Hypothesis #7. Support was found for Hypothesis 7 as continuance commitment based on economic exchanges was found to be a significant moderator of the following relationships: economic shocks-turnover intentions, economic shocks-task performance, and economic shocks-absenteeism. However, the type interaction between economic exchanges commitment and economic shocks in predicting absenteeism was counter to the prediction offered. As such, increased levels of COC-EE actually led to an increase in the strength of the economic shocks-absenteeism relationship. Additionally, the direction of this relationship was counter to the one proposed. For task performance, while the

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strength of the relationship remained relatively unchanged, the direction was positive for high levels of COC-EE.

In order to explain results relating to Hypothesis 7, recall the reasoning outline in the original hypothesis. It was suggested that the underlying desire to maximize economic exchanges would drive workers with high levels of COC-EE to not reduce task performance while increasing levels of turnover intentions and absenteeism. When faced with economic shocks, those high COC-EE workers that stayed with the organization would be more likely to engage in behaviors they view as most likely to increase economic benefits. On the other hand, there may be certain outcomes that act as a means of venting frustration associated with the shocks themselves. While this original line of thinking held true for turnover intentions, more unique relationships were observed for the shock-task performance and shock-absenteeism relationships.

For task performance, observed results suggest that high levels of COC-EE do not alter the strength of the relationship, but in fact flip the direction. This finding follows the same logic underlying the original hypothesis, but suggests a much more potent relationship. It appears that when a worker with high levels of COC-EE is faced with an economic shock and decides to remain with their organization, they not only are less likely to reduce task performance in hopes of maximizing economic benefits, but may actually *increase* their task performance. One possible explanation for this relationship is that when economic benefits are threatened is some way, high levels of COC-EE lead to a feeling of urgency directed at maintaining levels of benefits. In trying to cope with this sense of urgency, workers with high levels of COC-EE actually over-perform.

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In terms of absenteeism, the results of the current study run counter to those which were predicted in terms of the direction of the relationship. While COC-EE moderated the relationship between shocks-absenteeism, the relationship was negative (reduction in absenteeism) as opposed to positive (increase in absenteeism). This finding may be explained by a flaw in the original hypothesis reasoning. While turnover intentions are a means of venting frustration that is not tied to compensation, absenteeism may in-fact have direct ties to the exchange relationships associated with high levels of COC-EE. This assertion may hold especially true when considering the retail industry sample used in the current study. Due to the generally low job level of the subjects, it is very likely that absenteeism of any type is unpaid, and generally frowned upon. Additionally, even if absenteeism is not directly tied to compensation, there may be a perception among workers that management takes absenteeism into account when determining raises and promotions, even if only informally. As such, it is not entirely surprising that when faced with economic shocks, high levels of COC-EE lead workers to feel a sense of urgency resulting in not only increased task performance, but also decreased absenteeism.

Hypothesis #8. Partial support was found for Hypothesis 8 as continuance commitment based on few alternatives was found to be a significant moderator of the job alternative shocks-absenteeism relationship with high levels of COC-FA leading to a stronger positive relationship between job alternative shocks and absenteeism. This finding follows the original logic which posited that when faced with job alternative shocks, high levels of COC-FA would lead workers to vent their frustration through

whichever means are available to them. Increased absenteeism is one mechanism through which this frustration could be released.

In contrast to absenteeism, COC-FA was not a significant moderator of the job alternative shocks-turnover intentions relation or the job alternative shocks-task performance relation. These findings are particularly interesting in that they run counter to the relationships posited in Hypothesis 8. In terms of turnover intentions, it is possible that when faced with job alternative shocks, workers simply accept their situation regardless of COC-FA levels. As such, high levels of COC-FA are not necessarily related to an exponential increase in turnover intentions.

The lack of task performance moderation may require a slightly different explanation. While absenteeism may be a satisfying means of expressing frustration with shocks, task performance may be seen as an unacceptable way to vent. Though high COC-FA is associated with feelings of being stranded in an organization, those that remain with the organization even after experiencing job alternative shocks may recognize that if they want to remain with the organization they need to maintain a certain level of task performance. This is not to say that task performance does not decrease, but this decrease may not be exacerbated by high levels of COC-FA.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The results of the current study offer an encouraging examination of the moderating role that organizational commitment plays in the shock-outcome relationship for several very important workplace outcomes. Building on similar studies that question the view of job attitudes as merely antecedents (e.g., Burton et al., 2010), the results from

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this study hold several key implications for both organizational researchers and practitioners. In the following paragraphs, these implications are discussed in detail.

Theoretical implications. Traditionally, commitment is viewed as an antecedent of workplace outcomes such as those examined in the current study. While the role of commitment as antecedent has been well established (see Meyer et al., 2002), the moderating role of commitment, particularly as it applies to withdrawal behaviors, has been subject to markedly less examination. In light of this, the first major implication of the current study is the furthering of research in the area of commitment as it applies to moderation. Combining the results of the current study with those obtained by Burton et al. (2010) builds a compelling case for examining additional job attitudes in the role of moderator. Doing so may help to bridge the gap between job attitude as simple antecedent and job attitude as moderator.

With regards to commitment, one of the clear implications of this study is the necessity to use a multi-dimensional measure of organizational commitment, even when commitment is not the central focus of a particular study. Though such models have been popular in the literature for decades (Hackett, et al., 1994; McGee & Ford, 1987; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 1990; Mowday et al., 1979; Porter et al, 1974; Somers, 1993; Taing et al., 2011), researchers outside the commitment domain continue to shun multidimensional models in favor of one-dimensional versions (e.g., Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). While one-dimensional measures of commitment may be convenient for researchers treating commitment as an ancillary variable, the usage of these measures only clouds the domain. Additionally, using one-dimensional models may inadvertently overlook some potentially important relationships. The study at hand is a prime example

of this assertion. Forgoing a multi-dimensional measure in the current study may have resulted in the conclusion that commitment does not moderate the relationship between shocks and task performance when in fact COC-EE proved to be a significant moderator.

Building on the notion of multi-dimensional measures of organizational commitment, the current study holds an implication for the future treatment of continuance commitment. As described earlier, many researchers treat continuance commitment as a one-dimensional construct when in fact research has shown the continuance commitment is actually composed of two unique dimensions (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990; Somers, 1993; McGee & Ford, 1987; Jaros, 1997; Taing, et al., 2011). Results obtained in the current study add to this growing body of research as they indicate that a multi-dimensional conceptualization of continuance commitment lends itself to unique relationships as both a predictor and a moderator. For example, while COC-EE was a non-significant moderator of shocks-turnover, COC-FA was. On the other hand, COC-EE significantly moderated all three secondary withdrawal behaviors while COC-FA only moderated absenteeism. Based on these findings, future researchers ought to make an effort to utilize a multi-dimensional conceptualization of continuance commitment.

The final research implication of the current study focuses on the expansion of turnover models. While Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model holds some value in its current form, the results from this study indicate that newer models such as Burton et al.'s (2010) withdrawal model may prove more useful in predicting general workplace behaviors. This may be especially true in troubling financial times, such as the one our current economy finds itself it. During these economic low-points, jobs are harder to

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come by and workers are certainly less likely to give up a job they already hold. As such, the secondary effects of workplace shocks become that much more apparent. As influencing private industry is one of the goals of research in industrial-organizational psychology, researchers may need to push their focus beyond turnover models into withdrawal models that include secondary withdrawal behaviors such as those included in the current study.

Practical implications. In addition to the research implications of the current study, practitioners should be interested in some of the more practical implications. For example, results from the current study indicate that the effects of shocks on voluntary turnover are moderated by three dimensions of commitment. This finding ought to be very appealing to managers looking to mitigate the costs associated with employee turnover. Perhaps managers could implement a two-pronged approach whereby they aim to reduce the overall number of shocks they have control over, while also seeking ways to increase worker commitment so that the effect of remaining shocks are buffered. If reducing turnover is the goal, results indicate that targeting affective commitment may be the most fruitful for practitioners.

Another interesting implication for private industry is the results of my secondary analyses as they relate to turnover intentions, task performance, and absenteeism. While the relationship between shocks and some of these behaviors were buffered by certain forms of commitment (e.g., AOC and absenteeism), others actually exacerbated the relationship (e.g., COC-FA and absenteeism). Knowing that a worker can have various levels of all forms of commitment, practitioners may want to take care in which forms of commitment they promote. For example, pointing out that a worker is lucky to have their

job in light of the turbulent job market may increase their level of COC-FA, but would likely result in outcomes counter to those desired (i.e. - increased turnover) when faced with job alternative shocks. Conversely, investing in team building activities aimed at strengthening a worker's bond with the organization may increase levels of AOC across a company. As a result, the organization would be likely to see increased resistance to organizational shocks as they relate to turnover, turnover intentions, and absenteeism.

A final implication of the current study as it relates to practitioners is the actual measure of shocks. While 'life events' checklists exist (e.g., Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Schedule of Recent Experiences) and may serve as a useful starting point for some, the method used in the current study is a simple yet sophisticated way for any organization to record and monitor the types of shocks their employees are experiencing both inside and outside of the workplace. As the boundaries between the workplace and home continue to blur, the later of these shocks may prove to be the most useful. Companies need to note the possibility that shocks of all types could have real implications on their organization in terms of turnover, turnover intentions, task performance, and absenteeism.

Limitations

Though the findings of the current study are encouraging, there are some limitations that beg discussion. For starters, it is possible that when gathering task performance data from supervisors, multiple employees sought the feedback of the same supervisor. In doing so, a violation of an assumption of regression may have occurred. Another potential limitation deals with the sample demographics. When trying to generalize findings, it is desirable to having a sample population that most closely represents the normal population. Given the current sample, some may raise questions

concerning the unusually high number of minorities as compared with the general

working population. In addition, some may argue that the low-level jobs typically

associated with retail stores are not representative of the normal working population.

However, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that over 4.5 million workers are

classified as retail, with the number expecting to exceed 5 million by the year 2018. As

such, it would appear that the retail industry is a vital segment of the working population,

with its importance only growing in the coming years. Additionally, even if retail

employment is not representative of the entire working population, any researcher would

be hard-pressed to contend that their sample is truly representative.

The primary contribution of the current study is methodology as much as it is

quantitative findings. Because the measurement of shocks was tailored for the sample

used in the current study, a point could be made that the results are not generalizable.

While it is true that the shocks measured in this study may be sample or retail industry

specific, this assertion may not necessarily be accurate. Many of the shocks measured in

the current study are likely to cut across all industries. In the case where a shock is not

applicable, the method used in this study will enable researchers and practitioners to

quickly develop a more relevant index. Due to the fact that the methodology of the

current could be applied to any number of applied settings makes a strong case for the

usefulness of the results.

Future Research

Though the limitations in the current study are worth mentioning, they do not take

away from the very important contributions this study makes. However, it may still prove

wise for future researchers to note and address this study's shortcomings. In dealing with

the issue of one supervisor rating several subordinates on task performance, future researchers may want to recruit a sample with fewer direct reports per supervisor. Doing so would reduce the chance that one supervisor reports criteria for several workers. Though this is likely to be an issue with any retail sample, alternative industries may have smaller supervisor-subordinate ratios. Regarding the demographic breakdown of the current sample, future researchers may want to take care to recruit samples from areas known for 'traditional' demographic makeup. One way to do this would be to reference city or county census data to check the generalizability of the area in which a sample is located.

While they are important to address, the current study raises research questions beyond those attributable to limitations. For example, future researchers may want to explore the development of a universal shock checklist that can be used across industries. Perhaps the current study's list could be used as a starting point on wish researchers continue to build. By creating and maintaining such a list, researchers would save time while also ensuring that their study is using an up to date, comprehensive shock inventory. Similar lists already exist in other areas of psychology, and have so for some time (e.g., Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

Another direction that researchers may want to explore in the future is the idea of multiple interaction levels. For example, if researchers were to categorize leavers according to the paths described in Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model, they would then be able to look at the interaction between shocks, commitment, and pathway. Maybe it will be uncovered that commitment is only a moderator for leavers following a specific path. Such a study may tricky due to the inherent difficulty in measuring certain

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variables found in the unfolding model (e.g., scripts). In addition, obtaining a large enough sample size to detect potentially small interactions may prove difficult and time consuming, especially for dissertation level projects.

Finally, while the current study examines relationships between specific types of commitment and specific shocks, future research may look to broaden the commitment moderation examination. That is, perhaps examining how various combinations of commitment (profiles) interact with shocks to predict withdrawal behaviors would prove fruitful (e.g., Johnson, Groff, & Taing, 2009). In doing so, researchers may decide not to categorize shocks, but instead examine them as a whole. Conversely, researchers may decide to examine individual shocks as perhaps there are a small number of shocks that account for most of the variance in predicting withdrawal behaviors.

Conclusion

The current study offers empirical evidence to support the role of commitment as a moderator in the relationship between shocks and workplace outcomes. By utilizing a multidimensional model of commitment, I have been able to uncover some unique effects that the various forms of commitment have on specific shock-outcome relationships. In addition, the use of a longitudinal design establishes temporal precedence, an industry sample makes a strong case for generalizability, and multiple sources of data mitigate the potential for same source bias. Combined with a unique approach for documenting and measuring the various types of shocks, researchers and practitioners should find numerous applications of the current study. Overall, the results of this study are promising both for what they say about the importance of organizational commitment, as well as for their application in future studies.

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Appendix A: Affective Commitment

1. I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with my current organization

2. I really feel as if my organization's problems are my own

3. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization

4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to my organization

5. My organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me

6. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization

Appendix B: Normative Commitment

1. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer

2. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now

3. I would feel guilty if I left my organization now

4. My organization deserves my loyalty

5. I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it

6. I owe a great deal to this organization

Appendix C: Continuance Commitment- Econ Exchange

1. If I left my current job, I would lose out on a number of great benefits and perks

2. Leaving my current employer would be foolish because not many companies could offer the same pay and benefits

3. If I left my current organization, I would not lose much- the pay and benefits are lacking

4. It would be very difficult to leave my current organization because of the high level of economic support they offer

5. Although I may not identify with my organization, the manner in which they compensate me provides plenty of incentive to stay

6. I am considering leaving my company because of the effort and skills are not rewarded

Appendix D: Continuance Commitment- Few Alt

1. I would not consider leaving my current employer because there are just not alternative job opportunities

2. I cannot leave my organization until a new opportunity presents itself

3. There is no reason for me to stay with my organization other than the lack of available alternatives

4. The major drawback to leaving my organization would be the difficulty I would face in finding a new employer

5. Even if I wanted to quit, it would be hard to find another job

6. I remain at my company because I have nowhere else to go

Appendix E: Turnover Intentions

1. I constantly think about quitting

2. All things considered, I would like to find a comparable job in a

   different organization

3. I will probably look for a new job in the near future

4. I will probably find an acceptable alternative if I look for a new job

5. I am unlikely to leave my job soon

6. I don't have any intention to look for a new job

Appendix F: Job Embeddedness

1. My job utilizes my skills and talents well

2. I feel like I am a good match for my organization

3. If I stay with my organization, I will be able to achieve most of my goals

4. I really love the place where I live

5. The place where I live is a good match for me

6. The area where I live offers the leisure activities that I like (e.g., sports)

7. I have a lot of freedom on this job to pursue my goals

8. I would sacrifice a lot if I left my job

9. I believe the prospects for continuing employment with my

    organization are excellent

10. Leaving the community where I live would be very hard

11. If I were to leave the community, I would miss my non-work friends

12. If I were to leave the area where I live, I would miss my neighborhood

13. I am a member of an effective work group

14. I work closely with my coworkers

15. On the job, I interact frequently with my work group members

16. My family roots are in this community

17. I am active in one or more community organizations (e.g., churches,

    sports teams, schools, etc.)

18. I participate in cultural and recreational activities in my local area

Appendix G: Job Satisfaction

1. In general, I like working for my current employer

2. In general, I don't like my job

3. All in all, I am satisfied with my job

Appendix H: Shocks

1. Unexpectedly negative performance evaluation (AOC)

2. Argument with a co-worker (AOC)

3. Argument with my manager (AOC)

4. Unexpected job offer (FA)

5. Family emergency (e.g., sickness of family member) (NOC)

6. Sudden reduction in work hours (EE)

7. Sudden change in work shift (i.e. - moving from mornings to afternoons) (AOC)

8. Personal health issue (NOC)

9. Returning to or starting school, university or other training (NOC)

10. Completion of school, university or other training (FA)

11. New job for spouse (EE)

12. Passed over for promotion (EE)

13. Lower than expected raise (EE)

14. Witnessed unfair treatment of co-worker (NOC)

15. Change in benefits such as insurance (EE)

16. Change in job duties (AOC)

17. Birth of a child (NOC)

18. Increased responsibility without recognition (AOC)

Appendix I: Task Performance

1. He/she adequately completes their assigned duties

2. He/she fulfills the responsibilities specified in their job description

3. He/she performs tasks that are expected of them

4. He/she meets the formal performance requirements of their job

5. He/she engages in activities that positively affect their performance evaluation

6. He/she neglects aspects of their job that they are obligated to perform

7. He/she fails to perform the essential duties of their job